

EON

THE OFFICIAL EVE-ONLINE MAGAZINE

ISSUE #005

US\$14.95

200 ROUNDS

NEW EVE FICTION BY TOM CZERNIAWSKI

NEW EDENS

CCP'S OWN GENESIS PROJECT
IS BACK ON THE DRAWING BOARD

SCREEN PLAY

EVOLUTION OF AN EVE MOVIE
CLASSIC IN THE MAKING

EVE TV

CONFESSIONS FROM
BEHIND THE
CAMERAS

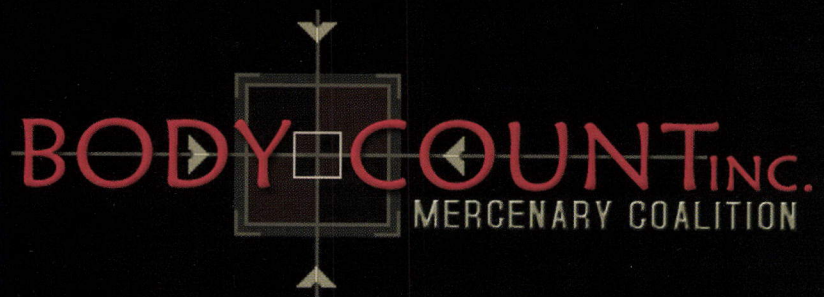


EVE
ONLINE

PLUS: STEALTH BOMBERS TESTED • MAGNUS AND REDUNDANCY INTERVIEWED
GUIDES TO MOON MINING, MISSION RUNNING AND THE SECOND GENESIS CCG



DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO WEAR THESE WINGS?



Body Count Inc. was EVE's first truly dedicated mercenary corp. Our pilots are selected exclusively for their ability to perform selflessly as part of a team. Membership in Body Count Inc. means you are part of a family whose bonds extend beyond the game. Honor and integrity are our way of life. Body Count Inc. is a founding member of the Mercenary Coalition alliance.

YOU WILL BE READING...



ARRS GRAZZNIC

He likes being told what to do, especially by mindless automatons



BODA KHAN

WTS foil 'Bomb Threat' with squared borders, all offers considered



DIGITALCOMMUNIST

Could this be the end for our first Test Pilot? Find out next issue...



ISTVAAN SHOGAATSU

He's good at making stuff up, unsurprisingly, so watch yourself



NYPHUR

When it comes to moons and how to mine them, this man knows all



SPACEDRAKE STORYTELLER

He tells stories, but he's neither spaced, or a rake. Or a duck, either



SPIRALJUNKIE

Star of radio, TV and now print too. Next stop: Bollywood...



STAVROS

For one night only, we present The Capslock King (applause)



URBAN MONGRAL

Say hello to our faithful new news hound. Press hats at the ready



WINTERBLINK

More comic capers from the well-seasoned eyelid flutterer



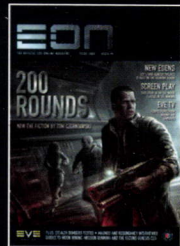
ZAPATERO

He's got his toothbrush packed and is all ready to go for Fanfest 06

RESPECT YOUR ELDERS

On my birthday (which also happens to fall on the same day as Oveur's) I was moving a couple of lowly Cruisers between stations, for no other reason than they and their owner were gathering dust and needed a good airing. Anyway, I was happily arsing about outside a particular station, minding my own business doing nothing of any great importance bar thinking just how attractive and elegant the Omen is (my first Cruiser, so you'll forgive the unashamed regard I have for such a lowly ship). Reminiscing done, I eventually docked, jumped into a battered old Frigate and prepared myself for a journey into 0.0 to collect a few modules I'd left lying about whose value added to only a fraction of the worth of my current clone contract. I was just pondering the pointlessness of my planned journey when I noticed that the local channel tab was winking at me. Flicking to it, someone had simply said: "wow. lo old timer!" Now I was already in something of a fragile state due to the steady advancement of years (I won't reveal my exact age, suffice to say my first gaming system was a Binatone TV Master MK6), but to be shouted out to all in the vicinity as infirm and near-incontinent almost caused the Werther's Original I had been sucking on to become lodged in my throat and the tartan blanket draped across my legs to fall off. Of course the comment was in reference to my character's age rather than my own, but it was quite a shock to be addressed in such an offhand way by a comparative pup. Seething, I responded: "I'll have you know I've gone toe-to-toe with Stavros... and survived." I wasn't lying either, although the battle was back in beta and was ended by a server crash. The rebuttal was swift and decisive: "Stavros lol." It's a testament to the success of EVE itself that veterancy is no guarantee of respect anymore — if it ever was. I may be senescent in EVE years, but a brief glance across my in-game resumé reveals very little to suggest I've lead an extraordinary in-game existence. Stavros, however, is something of a legend, which goes to prove another great facet of EVE. Firstly that legends can be created, but also that they can fade away. Still, at least us old-timers can spell. Nyah!

ALT OF ZAPATERO



EON

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If you have any questions, suggestions or comments relating to E-ON magazine, or would like to nominate a player for a future *In Character* article, please email eon@mmmpublishing.com. For advertising, please email ads@mmmpublishing.com for current rates. Queries related directly with EVE Online should be directed to CCP Games: www.ccpgames.com.

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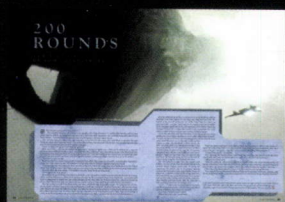




WE HAVE REAL SPACESHIPS

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LIKE BURIED TREASURES, THE OUTPOSTS OF EVE HAVE BECKONED TO ADVENTUROUS SPACE PILOTS SINCE TIME IMMEMORIAL...



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DC straps himself into the cockpit one last time to explore this much-maligned breed of ships

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Britain's finest export (to CCP, anyway) describes how he makes the visuals in EVE sing like the birds

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Because EVE isn't all about mining and piracy, you know?

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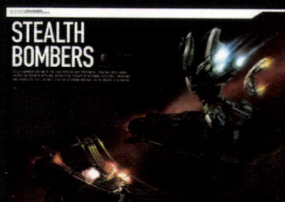
Sure those player-owned-structures look pretty and all, but did you know they can be useful too?

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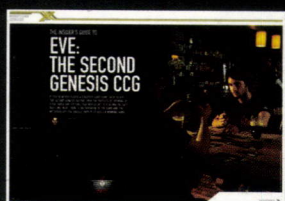
Can't stand staring at the monitor any longer? Here's the best way to play EVE away from your PC

78 TEH FUNNIES

Hello everybody, peeps...



50



72

➡ THE BIGGER THEY COME
THE HARDER THEY FALL — A MAXIM
NEVER MORE TRUE THAN IT IS IN EVE,
WHERE WORTH IS MEASURED IN SKILL
AND NOT IN SHEER SIZE ALONE



CAVEAT EMPTOR

INVESTORS LOSE BILLIONS AS ANOTHER SCAM ROCKS EVE UNIVERSE

“This is an official announcement from Cally of the EIB,” said the blurred figure in his low-grade confession video. “Yes, EIB was a scam.” If Cally, (who was also happy to admit in the video that his main character is Dentara Rast) is to be believed, the recent EVE Investment Bank scam netted him a staggering 790 billion ISK in a little over four months.

His confession in mid-August was greeted by howls of rage from those who were cheated, grudging admiration from people not involved and a smug feeling of “I told you so” from those who had called it a con job from the very beginning. When big news like a huge EVE scam is revealed, people tend to take notice.

EVE has always been a fertile ground for those looking to make a fast buck at somebody else's expense, especially as EVE is one of the few games out there with a shared resource system. In contrast to most of the rest of the MMORPG industry, who might seem to go out of their way to protect customers, CCP prefer to leave the mechanisms of trust to the players, so when it comes to in-game scams there is little sympathy with those hapless enough to be caught out by them. Forewarned is forearmed.

CCP's Chief Marketing Officer, Magnus Bergsson states: “There has been and will continue to be thefts and other scams in EVE. It's a hostile world where the strong survive. That is what the game is and what it will always be.”

EVE IS PVP GAME SHOCK

One of the most common misconceptions amongst the player base is that CCP allows (and even encourages) scams because it brings publicity to the game. Certainly the GHSC heist (see *Case Study #1*, right) not only brought attention to the game, but also thrust Tom Czerniawski (aka Istvaan Shogaatsu) into the limelight far beyond the EVE community. He was featured in a news item on *Slashdot*, a four-page article in *PC Gamer* and most remarkably of all, an article in *New Scientist*. However, according to Magnus Bergsson, “what people are finding so fascinating is more about what can be done in a game like EVE compared to other titles. However



If you learn anything from being scammed in EVE, it's to keep a firm eye on your bank balance, to keep anything you really don't want to lose in your personal hangar only, and to never, never trust anyone, ever

we have not actually seen any abnormal increase in subscription growth or decline due to this particular story.”

Of course, when a really big scam hits, one of the first things people invariably do is try to convert the amount of stolen ISK into real-world currency. As there is no official exchange rate between in-game ISK and US dollars, the estimates vary wildly. In this case, Cally's alleged haul of 790bn ISK could net anywhere between \$82,000 and \$170,000. While these are staggering amounts of money, they exist only as a hypothetical profit. Such a large amount would be virtually impossible to sell to a nefarious ISK dealer, despite Cally saying in a recent interview: “it would be easy to make [the ISK] disappear.” Undoubtedly, since the confession, the account would've been kept under very close surveillance by CCP, and there are tools in place to make sure players shifting billions of ISK will be noticed. Whether or not the movements of lesser amounts can be flagged is difficult to say, but it does appear Cally has no intention of releasing the funds outside the game.

Naturally, a high-profile scam has repercussions in the EVE universe. Count TaSessine of Interstellar Starbase Syndicate [ISS], the closest thing EVE has to a

Buy! Sell! Buy to sell!
Sell to buy! The confusion
and pandemonium that
can ensue following a
successful Ponzi scheme
can leave entire markets
in flux and chaos



Illustration: Hans Alan Tomasson

CASE STUDIES



Mirial – EVE's
most expensive
corpse. Victim
of an elaborate
heist and
revenge attack

CASE STUDY #1: REVENGE

An anonymous player hired the services of the Guiding Hand Social Club to get revenge on his enemy, Ubiqua Seraph and CEO Mirial. The player apparently paid one billion ISK to secure the GHSC's services and no doubt feels he got his money's worth. Over the course of nine months, all levels of the Ubiqua Seraph corporation were infiltrated by GHSC operatives, including one individual who rose to being Mirial's second in command.

At the appointed moment the trap was sprung and the GHSC infiltrators proceeded to systematically clear out the hangers of Ubiqua Seraph, passing the goods to further GHSC members flying haulers. In fewer than 15 minutes nearly 40 billion ISK worth of assets had apparently been stolen. Finally, the frozen corpse of Mirial, podded in battle during a vain effort to stop the heist, was delivered to the initiator of the contract, thus fulfilling the final condition.

CASE STUDY #2: DECEIT

When set up, the EVE Investment Bank looked like a legitimate investment opportunity created by a group of long-time players with spotless reputations. Money raised from players was apparently invested in various projects to provide a decent return. Over time, it started to look more and more legitimate as a series of emailed reports and faked screenshots were sent out to investors. To further enhance the illusion, interest was paid to investors.

Under the surface however, EIB was simply a Ponzi scheme, with any interest being paid out of the money raised from new investors. As with all such scams, however, it collapsed under its own weight, but not before Cally (see main story) had pocketed a considerable amount of ISK. Not the mostly stylish sting ever, but 790 billion sure buys a lot of nice threads.

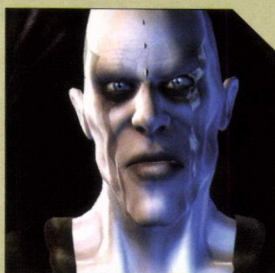


Cally, A real
merchant
banker

CASE STUDY #3: LIES

A real curiosity from the early days of EVE. Nightfreeze explained, in a 15,000-word essay published on the internet, a convoluted tale of how he conned several players out of the then enormous sum of 1 billion ISK in an apparent investment opportunity where they would club together to buy some Battleship BPOs.

However, all was not as it seemed. The story of the scam was in fact a scam itself. It was a work of pure fiction, invented by Nightfreeze. Viewed under this light, the scam can be considered a success (although, admittedly, a peculiar one) as a huge number of EVE players were taken in by it.



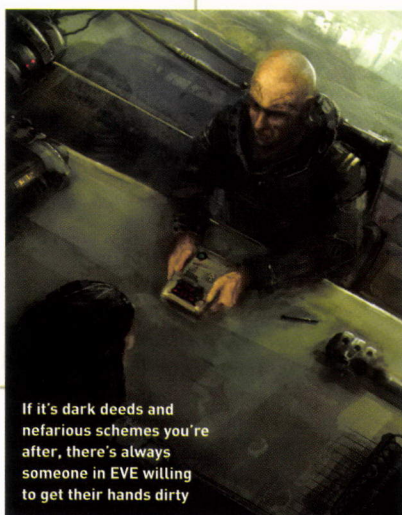
Nightfreeze,
a fantasy
billionaire

legitimate businessman (allegedly), is clear in his views. "EVE is like the Wild West with scammers and thugs all over the place and that's fun, in its own way. The problem is that, unlike the Wild West, thugs never have to face any consequences of their misdeeds." When asked about the effects on the legitimate economy, he is even more forthright. "Scammers cause unnecessary degrees of mistrust in the game, and it effectively prevents some amazing avenues of gameplay from ever being explored because people won't dare risk their money."

CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS

Change is on the horizon, however, for both scammers and legitimate businessmen. The first phase of the Kali expansion (named Revelations and due in October) will bring in the new contracts system which, to begin with, will allow players to 'sign' pre-defined, enforceable agreements with each other. Magnus Bergsson again: "In its core, the contract system won't address things such as a Ponzi scam but this will allow players to have more built-in safety systems which should discourage certain types of scams unless you are prepared to pay for the failure, in terms of taxation and contract fees."

Contracts will not mean an end to scamming. Players committed to stealing, embezzlement and theft will doubtless adapt to the new environment, so it's only a matter of time before news of the next really big scam hits. As always in EVE (as with life generally), the best advice is to follow the maxim: buyer beware. And here's one from Benjamin Franklin, just for posterity. "Lend money to an enemy, and thou will gain him, to a friend and thou will lose him."



If it's dark deeds and
nefarious schemes you're
after, there's always
someone in EVE willing
to get their hands dirty

EVE GETS IGBGs

➤ AND YOU THOUGHT THIS GAME WAS JUST SPACESHIPS AND MINING

Although CCP seems to be happily extending EVE's reach outside of the game, with the just-released CCG, a novel in the works and various other projects, inside EVE it's pretty much been business as usual. Players are shooting and scamming each other on a daily basis, forming alliances and basically being good (bad) little pilots. Occasionally someone decides to create something of genuine interest that could very well have in-game commercial potential. EVE's first game to be playable within the in-game browser (IGB) is one such creation.

OK, it's only *Connect Four*, but given the limits of the IGB, it's a start. "It's really cool," beams Nathan Richardsson. "It's multiplayer and it keeps score, so Syri Dominus should be congratulated on doing a great job in making it. Unfortunately the current version of the IGB doesn't really allow you to do complex things. On the other hand, I think that limitation is making the creators focus on simple fun gameplay rather than bells and whistles, and this is a perfect example."

Richardsson admits that CCP has long held plans to create IGB games itself, with ideas of creating a framework where IGB coders could submit games to a kind of

casino or arcade. Sadly other development projects have always taken priority. That being the case, would CCP allow a third-party to develop professional IGB games?

"Sure, if the opportunity arose we might look into it," says Richardsson. "But such a partnership would need to be in-keeping with EVE, so we wouldn't be interested in a simple version of Poker. It would need to be stylized to fit a bigger concept in-game." The CCG springs to mind...

"Yeah, absolutely that's all being thought about, especially the card game," admits Richardsson, "but it's a question of how well it transitions into the computer environment and the amount of work required to really represent the gameplay that's in the CCG."

For the moment IGB gaming will remain a community-developed feature, but now the ball has begun rolling we have a feeling this is a development that could snowball. Watch this space. *3D EVE Monster Maze* isn't far away...



OFFICIAL EVE ONLINE CHARTS

TOP 10 MOST DANGEROUS SYSTEMS

(by number of kills over last three months)

SYSTEM	REGION
Jita	The Forge
Kisogo	The Forge
S-UBA4	Syndicate
Oursulaert	Essence
Sobaseki	Loneftek
Amamake	Heimat
N-RAEL	Great Wildlands
Rens	Heimat
PF-346	Syndicate
Duripant	Essence

TOP 10 BUSIEST SYSTEMS

(by number of warpgate activations over past three months)

SYSTEM	REGION
Jita	The Forge
Sobaseki	Loneftek
Renyn	Essence
Isanamo	Loneftek
Urlen	The Forge
Amarr	Domain
Ashab	Domain
Oursulaert	Essence
Juunigaishi	The Citadel
Kisogo	The Forge

TOP 10 TRADE CORPORATIONS

(Total corp 'Trade' skillpoints / No. of members, Corp size >=25)

- Serenity Inc.
- Frontier Technologies
- N.A.G.A. Corporation
- Independent Manufacturers
- Omega Enterprises
- Quantum Dynamics
- Old Farts
- Rather Odd Industrial Dynasty
- Stoners Inc.
- Lyrus Associates



New media eats itself as you can now play games within games within games... not very complex games, but it's a start

TOP 10 MOST POPULAR SHIPS

#1 Kestrel



#2 Condor



#3 Bantam



#4 Rifter



#5 Merlin



#6 Bestower

CONVENTION TIME AGAIN

» IT'S BEEN A BUSY SUMMER FOR CCP'S LOCAL TRAVEL AGENT



across Europe and America. The exodus began in early August, with a trip to Indianapolis to attend GenCon – traditionally a hobby gaming convention, but recently elevated to cover video games. As a result CCP erected a two-tier booth, successfully launching and demonstrating both iterations of EVE – the online game and the CCG. A merry old time was had by all, not least Pierre Mahrlebaud, the winner of the inaugural EVE TSG tournament who left with \$2,000 in prize money and close to 1,500 cards.

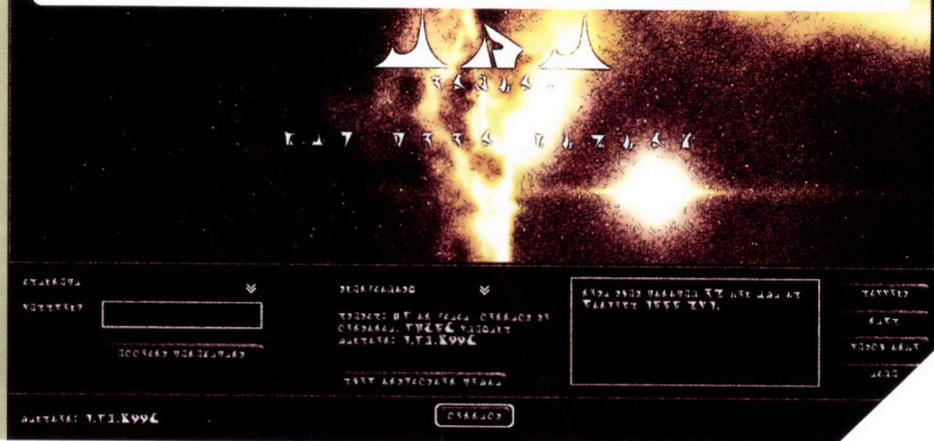
The next stop on the world tour was Germany for the Leipzig Games Convention, an event already established as the focus for the European games trade. 2006 attendance figures have now labelled the shindig as the world's biggest gaming fair. This time around for CCP, the focus was squarely on EVE Online, with the big news being the new localised client, meaning German fans can play EVE without needing a phrase book to hand.

September saw CCP return to the 'States for the more sedate Austin Game Conference, which was effectively an excuse to listen to other people yabber on about game design. The big news there was CCP's proclamation that EVE is now running on the largest gaming supercomputer cluster since Mathew Broderick took on the mighty WOPR in 1984's *Wargames*.

WARP DRIVE ACTIVE E-ON EDITION [C] M.LASTUCKA

EVE LOCALIZATION CONTINUES FOLLOWING THE SUCCESSFUL RELEASE OF A GERMAN GAME CLIENT. CCP REPRESENTATIVES INTERVIEWED DURING THE LEIPZIG GAME CONFERENCE WERE QUOTED AS BEING UPBEAT ABOUT THEIR NEWEST EFFORTS, STATING: "YOU'VE NEVER EXPERIENCED EVE UNTIL YOU'VE PLAYED IT IN THE ORIGINAL KLINGON."

NO FURTHER INFORMATION WAS AVAILABLE, AS THE UNIDENTIFIED CCP STAFFER SPENT THE REST OF THE NEXT DAY NURSING A CATEGORY 5 ROMULAN ALE-INDUCED HANGOVER.



CCP now seems to spend more time out of the country promoting EVE than it does back at the office – or, at least, that's what could be assumed after a summer of industry and trade gatherings



LET THEM EVE CAKE

Congratulations to EVE player Thomas Guidry (aka Riley Craven), who not only got married recently, but also managed to convince his wife-to-be that a wedding cake with an EVE ship across it would be a good way for them to begin their journey together into insecure space. We're told the guests were a little bemused, but the cake was quickly devoured and the happy couple managed to escape into the night without anyone adorning their Ibis with tin cans and shaving foam.

DESPERATELY SEEKING ADAM

Further evidence that certain portions of the EVE community have clearly been inhaling too much scordite dust is shown by the existence of www.evedating.com, a site where EVE players in need of such things can exchange phone numbers, private messages and, eventually maybe, bodily goop.

"My flatmate and I were talking about EVE and we came to the conclusion that really we're all computer geeks and lonely housewives," laughs Balsca, who set up the site. "If people find lurve on my site that would be fantastic, but I think most just wanna chat with other players like normal people, which is hard to do in game."



IN BRIEF

#7 Badger Mark II



#8 Executioner



#9 Imicus



#10 Tristan



WIN! GET YOUR HANDS ON THE CCG DECKS

It would be difficult to beat last issue's competition to win flights, accommodation and a free pass to attend the imminent Fanfest, so we're not even going to try. Instead we're asking *you* to put in all the hard work by designing a new EVE offline game to complement the recently released EVE: The Second Genesis CCG. Now we're not asking for you to send in your fully mocked up prototype of some EVE-themed homage to *Twilight Imperium* (because if you have one, you should really be talking to CCP directly). No, what we want are silly games – adaptations of much-loved playground chase games, simple card games, drinking games, etc. If it's something we can playtest, appreciate and have fun with, then we're all for it. Except EVE kiss chase, because we're all married. Some of us happily so.

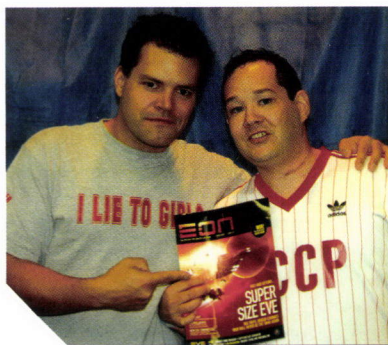
As for the prize, CCP is offering both starter decks and a booster set of cards to enable you to enjoy *EVE: The Second Genesis CCG* (see page 72). Even if you're not a fan of such games, believe us when we say these cards are worth having just for the artwork that adorns them. CCP is also including a signed and framed card from the CCG beta test, which is sure to be something of a collectable item in years to come.

TO WIN

The competition is open to everyone, although only one entry per person is allowed. Please email your short game designs to win@mmmpublishing.com, including your name, age and address. Entries must reach us before 11th December, 2006 and the winner will be notified on 2nd January, 2007, ensuring a happy new year.

The rules: Please try to avoid using materials that are copyrighted by existing game-producing companies (barring CCP, of course) and we regret that entries cannot be returned once submitted. The editor's decision is final in all matters. No cash alternatives. Responsibility cannot be accepted for lost or undelivered entries. Competition prohibited to employees of CCP, MMM Publishing or any affiliated companies.

LAST ISSUE'S WINNER



Congratulations to Christopher Standley who, as you read this, is packing his toothbrush and spare underpants in readiness for his trip to Iceland. Being fans of the 're-imagined' *Battlestar Galactica*, we were impressed that he managed to track down Chief Tyrol from the show, or rather his real-life alt, actor Aaron Douglas. Note how the Chief Petty Officer is careful not to actually touch the cover of E-ON #001, such is the regard in which he holds the first issue. At least that's our impression...

PRIVATE CHAT...



» Mr M runs EVE Geek (www.evegeek.com), probably the best in-game website there is. He's also responsible for EVE Tribune (www.eve-tribune.com), EVE's only weekly e-zine

What was the inspiration for EVE Tribune?

My main inspiration was actually the book *The Truth* by Terry Pratchett. But without sites like EVE Guardian and EVE News, I don't think I would have tried. EVE Guardian was a great source of news as long as it was working. But people need a carrot, or even better, ISK. Without it people will get tired and drop off. Plus I was bored. I never start things like EVE Tribune or EVE Geek without being really, really bored.

What's the process involved in creating an issue of EVE Tribune?

When there's some big event going on I try to get someone to cover it. Like we did in Issue 4 when it was a year since Dorian II was assassinated. The rest of the time I let my journalists come up with ideas (and now they know that I'll publish nearly anything). The weirder the better!

Any chance of there being any Page 3 Girls, Sudoku or sports pages in future issues?

I've actually thought about having a Page 3 Girl [UK tabloid newspaper topless models] but we do have the problem that avatars in EVE don't have any legs. And I do like legs...

Why not just create a regular EVE website?

I wanted to copy the format of a real newspaper as much as possible. With a news site it's always hard to publish anything that isn't hard news. You can't really publish a fictional story or a comparison between Wales and The Forge. A real magazine like E-ON, on the other hand, has the problem of a long press delay so it's a lot harder to do anything about the latest events. I think the Tribune slides in nicely somewhere between E-ON and a news site like EVE Guardian.

Hang on... you're muscling in on E-ON territory? Would you like to step outside?

Can't really compete with a glossy front cover!

So with Geek and Tribune doing well, do you have any upcoming plans for other sites to cover the EVE universe?

Not right at the moment, but you just never know. Don't underestimate the power of boredom.



THE SECOND GENESIS
COLLECTIBLE CARD GAME

IT'S COMING!

EVE: The Second Genesis™
Turns downtime into quality time



Available in stores in October

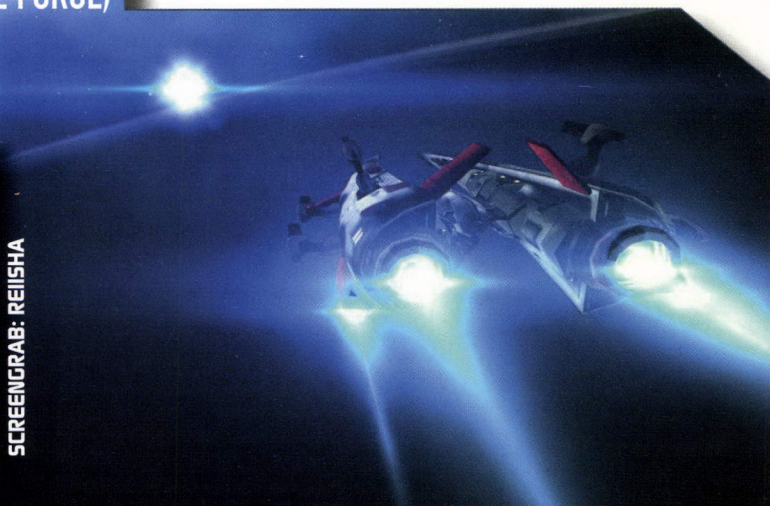
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>>> JITA (THE FORGE)

Countless pilots have been to this, the busiest system in EVE, hundreds – maybe thousands – of times. Locals complain of the bustle, passers-through complain about the locals, yet, just a minute of flying, and you may find a completely new perspective on that same place... there is a lot left to discover, right around that corner...

SCREENGRAB: REISHA



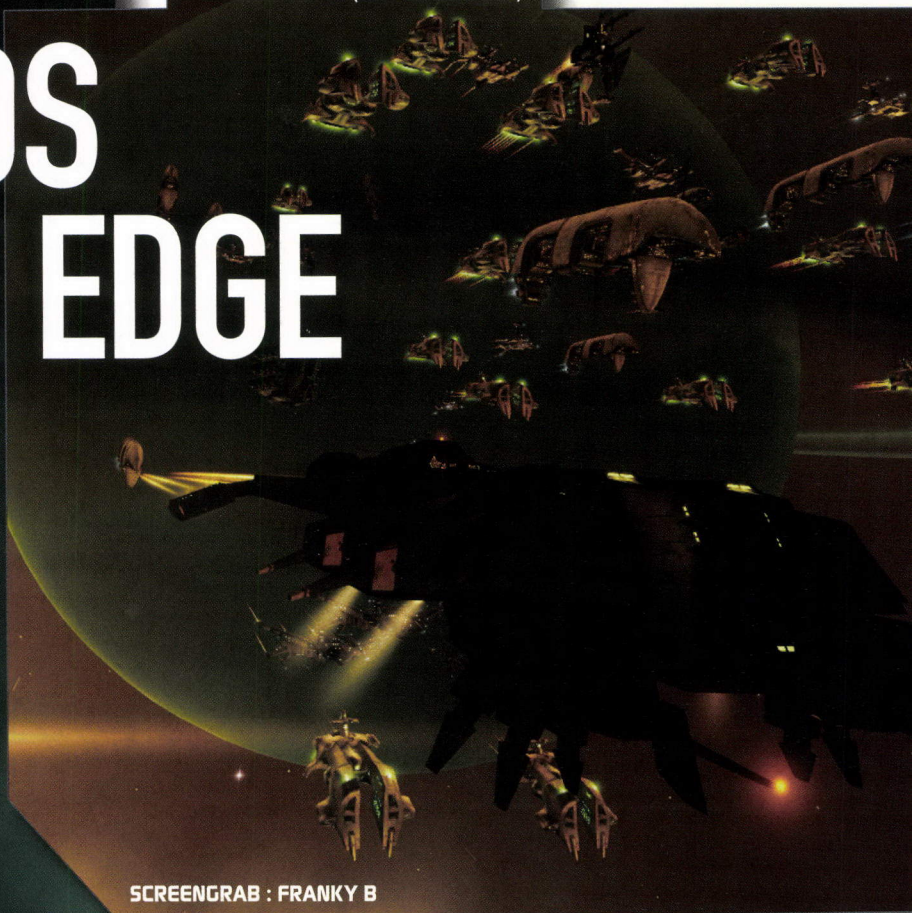
>>> ROIR-Y (PURE BLIND)

POSTCARDS FROM THE EDGE

IN ASSOCIATION WITH EVE FILES
WWW.EVE-FILES.COM

OF HUMAN AND ETHEREAL,
FAITH AND CERTAINTY, WAR
AND AMITY, BETRAYAL AND
RELIANCE – EVE IS THE
AMALGAM OF OPPOSITES

IF YOU WISH TO SUBMIT A
POSTCARD FOR CONSIDERATION
IN A FUTURE EDITION OF E-ON,
PLEASE VISIT WWW.EVE-
FILES.COM, UPLOAD YOUR
IMAGE AND FOLLOW THE
INSTRUCTIONS



SCREENGRAB : FRANKY B

>>> CZDJ-1 (DEKLEIN)



SCREENGRAB : DOZ3R

The D2 alliance gathers its ships to attack CZDJ-1, where spies report an assembly of ships that were once close allies. The politics, however, are lost as the ships make ready for the coming, bloody assault.

>>> ZXIC-7 (CATCH)

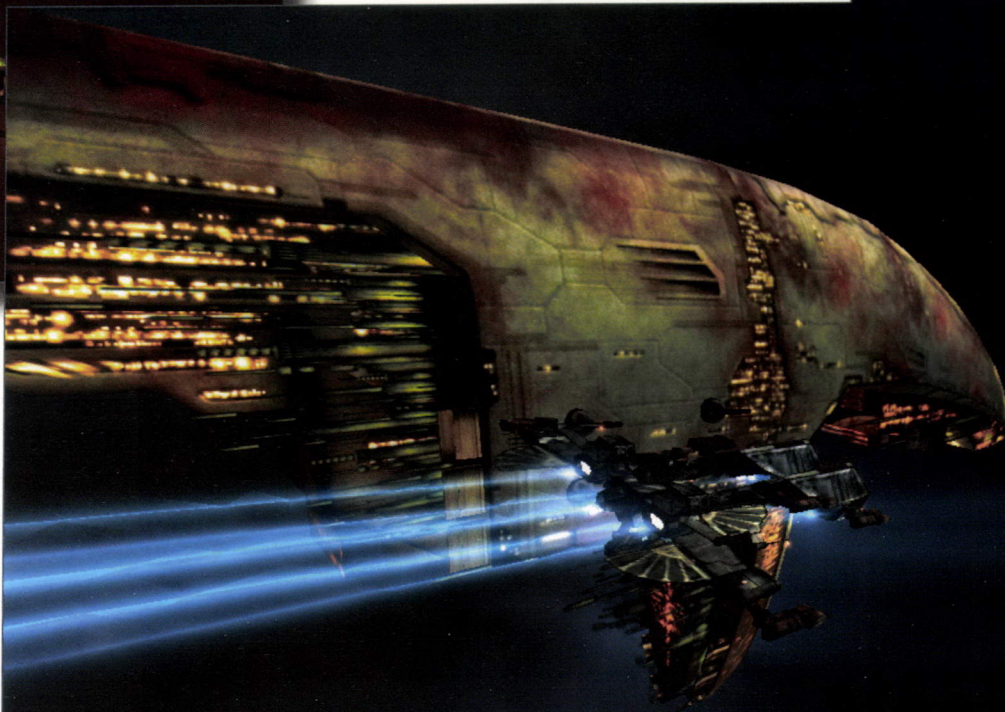


SCREENGRAB: THOR PAYNE

The newest ISS outpost sits proud above the rings of its anchor planet, deep in Catch. With the ISS Marginis outpost in the neighbouring system, it would appear that for the Interstellar Starbase Syndicate and its mission to colonize 0.0 space, Tycho represents another expensive step closer to the fulfilment of its grand ambition to cultivate and bring capitalism to the frontier.

In the opening stages of a joint IRON and G Alliance war effort, a 90-strong IRON escort fleet is seen assembling in ROIR-Y, preparing for departure. Shadowing them, an unthreatening freighter looms in the background, full of essential station equipment and consumables, eager to break through whatever blockades lie ahead.

>>> UOSUSUOKKO (LONETREK)



The frigate danced around the lethargic laser pulses of the Blood Raider vessel. Desperately evading the concentrated streams of searing light flashing across his hull, he only hoped it wouldn't be his blood that was next smeared on the golden covering of the pirate ship. His speed and agility could only protect him for so long. Once the computers had compensated for his speed... that future wasn't worth thinking about.

SCREENGRAB: TREG VALAR

MAGNUS BERGSSON

CCP STARTDATE: February 2004

POSITION: Chief Marketing Officer

AKA: Classified

A MARKETING GUY WHO ACTUALLY PLAYS GAMES IS RARE. ONE WHO PLAYS THE GAME HE'S EMPLOYED TO MARKET IS RARER STILL, YET CCP'S CMO PROBABLY PLAYS EVE AS MUCH AS ANYBODY... WELL, ALMOST

What led you to CCP? What were you doing before?

Most of my working life has been spent in two companies that I started and then sold. One was a company that sold corporate fax solutions (hey, they were the cool thing back then!) to Fortune 500 companies in the US. The other was an internet company that started the first auction website in Iceland. Then I made a grave mistake of working for a 'regular' company here in Iceland with the typical corporate structure and so on, but quickly discovered that that was not what I was looking for. CCP contacted me and after visiting and seeing what it was doing it was an easy decision to join up. To date I consider that to be one of the smartest things I have done, excluding, of course, marrying my wife ("Hi honey!").

What does being the head marketing guy involve on a day-to-day basis?

That actually depends on if a new release is coming out or not. During the release count down, most of my time is spent on promotion planning, placement ordering, banner creation, PR attack plans, etc. After a campaign starts we keep a close eye on each medium we are using and track them carefully in order to ensure a positive return on investment. It's a marketer's dream to see in real time the effectiveness of every single campaign. Between releases we work on developing new markets, increasing our affiliation network, planning the Fanfest, doing trade shows and so on. The marketing department is now six people, and I am lucky to have a great team that makes sure all this stuff gets done, allowing me to sit in space and collect corpses.

How would you classify yourself: Marketing Manager/CCP Employee/EVE fan?

EVE Fan, CCP Employee, *then* Marketing Manager! I'm lucky to work for a company that is creating something I am extremely passionate about, so I'm absolutely a fan of EVE. One of the great things about CCP is the moral and company culture, and this has fostered the feeling of team spirit. All of us have a task to perform and all those tasks are required to bring EVE Online to the players. It so happens that my task is to manage the marketing department, so I would place that last even though it's most important to me on a daily basis, of course.

Is EVE a difficult game to market?

In some aspects. It's not easy to create the typical definition of what EVE Online actually is. It all depends on what the player chooses to do. Second, it's been hard to identify a target audience, excluding the obvious fact that they are mostly men with an average age of 27. Initially we mostly had the hardcore gamer daring to play, but now we are seeing a much wider assortment of gamers joining, which is great news for the game, but makes it a bit trickier for us. Third, EVE can be pretty brutal in the first month of play due to the rather steep learning curve, so we must be careful not to portray it as a game for everyone as that's simply not the case. Fourth, fantasy games have been much more popular than sci-fi games, but it seems that many users are now becoming a bit tired of chasing half-naked elves. So it can be tricky, but we are very fortunate to have a community that helps us in not just promoting the game, but who are also extremely helpful to new users in-game, and that makes our lives a lot easier.

What campaigns have been particularly successful?

Actually almost all campaigns we do have been successful, the main reason behind that being that we keep a very close eye on them. If a medium is underperforming we cut back on it, if it is doing well we increase our exposure there. Still the most successful campaign we have done has been on MMORPG.com. Not only because we have advertised there but also because it is backed up by great reviews by users.


How involved are you in EVE's expansion into China?

I was involved in the first steps, which involved finding a partner there to work with – Optic. One of the reasons is that we had very limited knowledge of the market forces in China, so Optic is now responsible for all the marketing over there. It's a very dynamic gaming market that is changing rapidly and growing at a very fast pace. Users eat through content in China faster than any other country and their play style is more aggressive. So we're in a good position as we have a mature game that has a ton of content, but we must make sure we continue on our path so the Chinese expansion will be good for everyone in the long-run, even though it's taken a bit from our development resources in the short-term.

How do new markets like China help EVE in the long-term?

It makes EVE more interesting to have people from across the world playing. It creates a more even flow of online users, it allows growth in virgin territory, and eventually brings peace and harmony to the globe!

Many MMOG developers saw *World Of Warcraft* as a major threat when it launched. Did you?

To be honest, no! We were very happy about *WOW*'s release as we believed that Blizzard would bring a lot of new users to MMOGs. EVE is so different to *WOW* that we didn't believe it would take a large cut from us, and we were right. Where are users going to go after playing one of the best fantasy MMOGs? Hopefully to a sci-fi game instead! 

AND WHEN YOU'RE NOT WORKING..?

What music do you like?

I enjoy many different types of music, depending upon the occasion. Queen is my favourite band – pure genius. I'm not sure if I should admit this, but the music from *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* does things for me that I can't explain. And no, I don't have secret dreams to wear lingerie and makeup!

Favourite films?

Easy, Star Wars – A New Hope. I remember seeing that movie and wanting to be in space flying around killing – and now here I am. *Delicatessen* was also a movie I enjoyed a lot.

What games do you enjoy?

EVE is of course my favourite, which I play regularly. I was a heavy *Counter-Strike* player, but now I occasionally fiddle with my Xbox and play *Fight Night*. I've also started to play the new EVE card game and am enjoying that a lot even though I had never tried those types of games before. It's good to step away from the PC once in a while.

Read any good books of late?

I must admit that lately I haven't had time to read. I think the last book I read was *The Da Vinci Code*, which was pretty decent.

What sports team do you follow?

I have a few so here they are in no particular order: Manchester United (soccer), Valur (also soccer with a bit of basketball), the Icelandic national handball team and, of course, CCP's synchronised folk-dancing team.

Will you be getting heavily inebriated during the Fanfest?

Will there be inebriating beverages at the Fanfest? Nathan!

Were you ever to face execution, what would you want your final meal to be?

A Manhattan cocktail to chill out, a bottle of Château Mouton Rothschild Pauillac, deep-fried camembert with a raspberry sauce for appetizer, T-bone from Mortons as a main course, then a few 'special' brownies with vanilla ice cream. Or an Estamels-fired Navy Raven – it's a toss-up really.



Portrait: Thorsten Henn; www.image.is

OMBER ZOMBIE



PLAYER PROFILE

NAME:	Omber Zombie
CORPORATION:	Frontier Technologies [FTEK]
POSITION:	Production Specialist
ALLIANCE:	None
SPECIALITY:	Rock Empathy
SECURITY RATING:	4.3
MOST LIKELY TO SAY:	"Sure I have time, how can I help?"
LEAST LIKELY TO SAY:	"Don't vote for Oz, vote for Fioritan."



Omber Zombie has a reputation for being a kook. A well-deserved reputation, the slender Gallente admits. His nocturnal eyes seem permanently glazed over, as if the mind is elsewhere, yet in an instant he's back in the room, as if never having been away. He's astute, wilful and still slightly 'out there' – despite the therapy and extensive re-gene treatment.

Oz, as he likes to be called, is happy to take a backseat, yet often finds himself pushed to the fore. His early career with Critical Mass Enterprises is pocked with firsts. He masterminded the building of the first privately-funded Battleship in Empire space, and is one of the most skilled production experts of his generation.

As a member of one of the founding corps behind the first Fountain Alliance, he was shuffled to the front once more, finding himself installed as CEO, a role he admits is one he's not best suited to. His short tenure was marked by two ongoing wars and an exodus of pilots – the ordeal literally turning him nuts as he escaped to help form a new outfit whose collective aim was simply to 'go insane'.

THE MINING

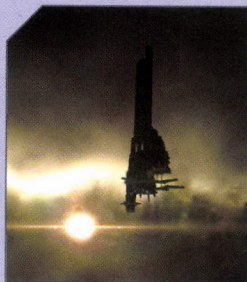
"We knew each other so well, it was an almost psychic connection in that we knew what the others were thinking almost without asking," Oz remembers of the time in The Jovian Strain. "We dabbled in piracy and attempted to get a name for ourselves through sheer insane acts. We mined a load of ore simply to have a competition to see how much of it we could jettison into space. We attacked each other over jealous spats. We were random. It was a lot of fun, but not very productive."

At the same time Oz was known as 'the guy who thinks he's a rock'. His self-confessed love/hate relationship with asteroids wasn't simply a side-effect of stress, but a trait that had long lain dormant.

Navy Megathron
Class 'Fioritan's
Black Eye'



The now
defunct
outpost
commonly
known as
'The Blue
Pill', which
EVE Uni
helped to
build and
defend



"Early on in my career, I spent a lot of time staring at the geological information scrolling across my visual interface," he says. "Most of it was to do with mineral contents streaming into my cargo hold. When I say a lot of my time, I mean I pretty much lived like that for weeks on end. Then one night while I watched my lasers bore into the largest Omber asteroid I had ever seen, a vision was given to me – living asteroid souls, being sucked into the vacuum of death by my mining lasers. Obviously I was a little bit freaked out, so I did a bit of investigating and found references in old texts referring to a cult known as 'Gaia' and came to the conclusion that the visions were attempts at communication from the Great 'Roid. It was now my job to spread that message."

Which he did. The corp embarked on a short but intense period of terrorism, attacking mining ships for their unprovoked attacks on inert rocks. His cause was ridiculed, yet some rallied to the banner.

I was diagnosed as having the J-12 virus which, as part of its known side-effects brought on hallucinations and delusions of grandeur

"Along the way I was also diagnosed as having the J-12 virus which, as part of its known side-effects, brought on various hallucinations and delusions of grandeur. After being cured of that, the Great 'Roid stopped communicating with me."

Mental and employment instability seemed intertwined, with brief, untimely stints as part of Jericho Fraction following a stay alongside old war enemies, mOo. It's a move that appears oddly to have helped stabilise the then off-kilter (and thanks to a lottery win, also very rich) pilot.

"It was an eye-opening experience. The calibre of the pilots was just amazing and to watch what they were doing from the inside showed me exactly why they had the reputation they did. I learnt the most valuable lesson that can be learned – ISK or skill are nothing without respect. That's something that is utterly invaluable."

BACK TO SCHOOL

Omber Zombie then joined EVE University and despite much respect gained for Morning Maniac ("He has a drive and energy that I have never seen matched. There is not a single person that I respect more than him."), he found himself pushed back into the role of a diplomat and leader. Quickly remembering the dealings of the past, he retreated to where he is today, happy in the role in which he began – a production specialist for Frontier Tech.

"I build things. I sell them. I do cost analysis on future ways to expand. I've also become a stockbroker for EVE Galactic Stock Exchange. I seem to have stumbled into the role, but it is one that suits me."

His eyes disappear for a split second, back to the past, then return as if they'd never been away. "I still don't mine, and I sometimes wonder if the 'voice' in my head was real or just a part of the disease. Either way, you won't find me mining for hours on end any more."

Isn't it time YOU learned how to fight back ?

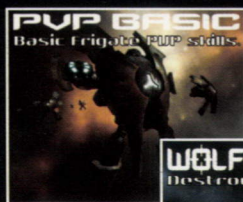
5000+
Graduates



3000+
Kills

1
University

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3 hours of training.
Unlimited hours of fun !

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WEB: <http://www.agony-unleashed.com>
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MY BETTER HALF

NEW FICTION BY
TOM CZERNIAWSKI



"How could she have been so blind..."

The woeful howl of a cold December wind made for poor companionship, mused Tylan Laharl, his blank eyes locked upon the grey city streets below. Sheets of driven rain crashed into the hotel's plastic window with the cadence of a war-drum.

Still, he could not justify feeling any sort of anger toward his wife. The circumstances of her infidelity were hardly run-of-the-mill and had necessitated his sequestering in the motel until Tylan figured out his next course of action. He allowed himself a bitter chuckle. This mess was practically a holo-vid script in the making.

Tylan Laharl, successful Intaki film star and director. Tylan Laharl, family man and loving husband. Tylan Laharl, cuckold to a fucking clone. His fist clenched and unclenched in a sign of impotent rage.

The cloning revolution had swept through the empires of New Eden like the AI, computer and industrial revolutions of centuries past. At first solely meant to extend the priceless lives of capsules, the technology was quickly adopted by the wealthy and renowned. The subject was one rarely broached in polite conversation, as maintaining clones of oneself was perceived as slightly macabre. Still, it was widely seen as a given that any individual with both the requisite wealth – and fear of death – would possess such an insurance policy, often hidden away and best left unmentioned. Tylan himself maintained one out of necessity; in a past life, he had been severely injured during a movie stunt, sustaining life-threatening wounds that could only be addressed by cloning and starting anew.

With the revolution came the inevitable pitfalls inherent to unchecked technological

Illustration: Hans Alan Tómasson

advancement. The first cases of hijacked clones being used to commit crimes or impersonate important dignitaries for purposes of espionage had hit the news some twenty years prior. Short of prohibitively expensive genome sequencing or a skeletal scan, there was no quick way to detect these doppelgangers – it truly was the perfect crime. One could even conceivably employ it to sleep with another man's unwitting wife.

Who could it have been, he wondered. His mind raced with paranoid theories. His wife had visited the movie set a number of times. There was the catering worker who openly flirted with her, but he lacked the resources for something so elaborate and Tylan discounted him quickly. There was the film's producer, an abhorrently obese and wealthy Gallente with a penchant for invading personal space and kissing ladies' hands. There was his co-star, a burly Brutor upon whose firm derriere his wife had teasingly commented on many an occasion. Truth be told it could be anyone, he thought – Tylan's life was certainly one worth stealing.

He slammed his fist into the plastic window, recoiling in pain as the inanimate object refused to give way in any sort of dramatic and fulfilling fashion. Tearing apart this hotel suite had crossed Tylan's mind before and while likely cathartic, would have done little to soothe his anger in the long term. Besides, the cuckold had already formulated a better plan.

"Never fuck with a film-maker," he warned the hotel furniture with a dire mutter, picking up a pocket holo-cam from the nightstand nearby.

In the coming days, he would be his simulacrum's unseen shadow. He would film the duplicate from a distance, film his every mannerism and compare it to his own. The research he had conducted on the infamous clone-hijack of one Pier Ancru suggested that a consciousness transplanted into a new body would retain its previous nuances of behaviour. Thus he filmed and filmed, waiting with building rage, watching for the clone to scratch his pet Furrier the wrong way, or pick up a fork with the wrong hand, or call his children by the wrong name, or stuff its tongue down his wife's throat. *His* wife's throat.

He ground his teeth until he tasted grit in his mouth.

+++

Having returned to his exile in the hotel, Tylan sat and pored over the pages of notes he had scribbled down during his one-man stakeout. Frustrated, he tore pages out of the notebook, crumpled them up and cast them aside. The duplicate was flawless in every respect but one.

Filming on Tylan's latest holo-vid had begun some three months prior. It was tentatively titled *The Family* and told a story of murder and organized crime told from the perspective of a Caldari mercenary. Filming was the most demanding part of the movie-making process and Tylan recalled the many sleepless nights spent at his film studio, away from his family for weeks on end, his thoughts never leaving them. It was here that the clone differed from him – almost as though to taunt him it spent an inordinate amount of time with the family it had

➡ The first cases of hijacked clones committing crimes or impersonating important dignitaries for purposes of espionage had hit the news twenty years prior. One could even conceivably employ it to sleep with another man's wife

appropriated, living his life, hugging his sons and always kissing his wife. He wished he could confront her directly, but the clone was proving far too convincing and Tylan feared she would not believe his outlandish claims.

He had his evidence now, however. It was simply a matter of bringing the film and his notes to a CONCORD ground station. The hijacking of a clone was unilaterally viewed by the four nations of New Eden as a capital crime and human rights statutes extended only to those consciousnesses that occupied their rightful bodies. To all intents and purposes the duplicate wasn't even human. Tylan relished the thought of his stand-in being sold to an Amarr slave camp and being beaten brutally for the rest of his short, painful life, trapped in a body not his own.

The acid rain came in suffocating torrents, stinging his eyes and nearly obscuring the towering CONCORD installation with its improbable, near-horizontal density. The place was an authoritarian fortress and Laharl pushed through crowds of officers streaming out, and shackled criminals pouring in. An unoccupied officer caught his attention, and he approached the bored-looking man, dropping his reams of evidence in unceremonious fashion upon the desk.

"I'd like to report a clone jack."

The CONCORD man stirred. Clearly this was no everyday occurrence, having shaken him from his ennui so quickly, noted Tylan. His face lit up with the slightest hint of a smile.

+++

"Sir?"

With revenge looming, Tylan Laharl had finally given in to exhaustion. The CONCORD officer prodded him again, rousing him from his sleep. "Sir, we have apprehended the accused and brought your wife to the station. Come with me."

Finally. The past few weeks had been hell on earth for Tylan, but at last it would be set right. He followed the gleaming black uniform to what appeared to be an interrogation room. It was the first time he had glimpsed his beloved wife's face through something besides a telephoto lens in as far as he could recall. He rushed to embrace her, but the CONCORD officer stepped between them. With a stern glare, he ordered Tylan to sit. For some reason, his spouse eyed him warily.

"There have been some inconsistencies in the story you gave us, Mr..."

The CONCORD man glanced hesitantly at Tylan, then at the duplicate. Another officer entered the room shortly thereafter.

"Well, whatever you're called. To put it bluntly," continued the seated officer, "we have no way of telling which of you is the original. You have both been cloned, so a skeletal scan is out of the question and, frankly, we lack the resources to do a genome analysis."

Tylan's blood ran cold. "Just ask my wife. She knows me. She is my better half." His eyes turned expectantly toward her and were met with naught but a cold stare. The CONCORD man turned to Tylan's wife.


"Ma'am? Your thoughts?"

The woman shifted. As though defeating one last bit of uncertainty in her mind, she wrapped her arm around that of the doppelganger. "Officer, I think I know my husband."

Her eyes took on a devilish gleam, one that made Tylan feel she knew exactly what was going on. She continued. "My husband is a caring and loving family

man." She probed Tylan's eyes as tears welled up in them, the shock of her utter betrayal finally hitting home. She hadn't been tricked; she had simply traded up. Whore.

"And my husband is right here," she explained, her eyes never leaving Tylan's but her embrace of the foul copy tightening visibly. "He is my better half. He is all the husband I could possibly ask for." Her voice took on a bitter tint. "He spends time with his family."

Tylan found himself dragged to his feet and secured in chains before he could react. Kicking and screaming, he was pulled from the interrogation room by the two CONCORD officers. He tried shouting at the top of his lungs, reciting facts and events from his marriage to his wife, but they fell on deaf – or purposefully ignorant – ears. With his last glimpse toward the interrogation room, he caught sight of his dupe tenderly kissing his wife's hand. 

Istvaan Shogaatsu reminds the players of EVE to log on to their wives as often as they do EVE Online.

TEXT: SPIRAL JUNKIE

EVE Radio DJ, born-again EVE noob and pretend TV anchorman, Spiral blagged his way to Iceland and almost managed to convince 10,000 viewers he'd done this sort of thing before



REYKJAVIK, ICELAND. THE MIDDLE OF JULY. A DOZEN EVE PLAYERS, A BUNCH OF EVE DEVS, A LOT OF EXPENSIVE SOUND AND VIDEO EQUIPMENT AND ONE EXASPERATED AUDIO PROFESSIONAL. ADD IN A HEAVY DOSE OF LUCK, A LOT OF LATE-NIGHT DRINKING AND OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY, AND *VOILÀ!* THE BIRTH OF EVETV

☞ It started just like any other normal day, which is to say at about 1pm. I'd sat down at the PC, waited a good half hour for the supposedly future-proof technology to boot up the operating system, painfully watched the important stuff – EVE, xChat, MSN – all load, then ordered pizza.

A message flashed from my good friend Urban Mongral. "You done any TV work before?" he asked. "Why, loads," I replied, swaying a little from the truth. As a drama graduate I'd of course done my fair share, but I'd certainly not got to the stage where I had my own star on Hollywood Boulevard. Turns out Urban and his many CCP contacts were organising coverage of the second Alliance Tournament, and they wanted some sort of video coverage. Knowing EVE Radio had covered the final last time to the tune of more than 1500 listeners, my ears perked up (my show peaks at 14 individuals), and after having been told a few scant details about when and how this would happen, I was assured I'd "hear more soon".

The next few days saw me harassing Mongral constantly, as a small child might, wanting to know if there was any more news, and wondering out loud, over and over, where my tickets were. Getting flown out to Iceland on someone else's chequebook was still something I wasn't completely able to understand, so until the flight details arrived, I couldn't fully believe this wasn't some kind of horrible trick devised to pay me back for my part in a certain waxing (another time, dear reader, another time). During these difficult times I also found out who'd be joining me as part of the crew, including DJs Xyliana, Xod, Xman and Jus4ck. We were also going to inherit two community 'experts', namely Ifni and Stavros, both renowned in their own field, whether that be knowing about EVE, or just being an all round IRC nubcake. And some French dude who'd be manning the cameras for us.

IT STAYS LIGHT ALL NIGHT?

Then suddenly, they were here. Tickets arrived via email, proper confusing, but allegedly completely legit. Which gave me five days to pack enough stuff to last three weeks, which I did, and then some: weight allowance for baggage, 20 kilos – my bag, 31 kilos. But that was evened out by our cameraman, Hinik, whose thought process went thus: 'I'm going for three weeks, so I'll take three t-shirts.' Seriously, the man brought three tops, that's it. So the three of us (Xyliana being the last) met up at the airport, and flew out to Iceland a week before everyone else. Icelandair were good enough to provide us with bread, water and photocopied chicken on the plane, but made up for it by showing both a 1994 episode of *Top Gear* and everyone's favourite, *LazyTown*.

We landed, and were met by Macaulay Culkin lookalike, CCP content developer and night-time ninja, LeMonde. Disappointingly, he was only driving a huge car and not some sort of spaceship, but as we landed well past midnight (yet still surrounded by Icelandic daylight!) we didn't really mind.

Cue a long search for apartments. Seems no-one had told him where we were staying, so we spent the best part of two hours looking for somewhere we ☞

Below: the 'studio' in all its glory. The 'talent' prepares for the next round of analysis, while the camera 'crew' maintains the level of 'professionalism'

Below right: the EveTV control room in full flow. Note worried technician checking on next pizza delivery time



CONFESION OF A TV JUNKIE





Ⓢ didn't know the name or address of. Of course, we didn't find it. So we ended up at a small cottage thing that CCP owns, that sleeps two happy people. So I got the double bed, Hinik the child's room, and Xyliana the sofa. Some of you may question my lack of gentlemanly attitude, but I got in first, and called shotgun. It's fair game.

NICE OFFICE, WE'LL TAKE IT

The first day in Iceland had LeMonde picking us up from our lodgings and taking us to CCP. Xyliana had already been out a few weeks before with Urban to help set up the logistics of the event, but this was a first for me and Hinik, so as we walked down a corridor with the glowing white logo luminescent at the end, it's fair to say that, maybe, a small bit of pee came out.

We were rounded up and introduced to all the important people, then shown to a part of the CCP nerve centre where we could set up the 70 computers they made available to us in the high-tech control room known as the staff canteen. Now you may be thinking that this wasn't a great idea, but it did have many strategic advantages, none being more important than being closer to the grub than anyone apart from the hard-working GM team. We also had a peek at the boardroom, where we'd be setting up the studio. One glass wall, one full window, one normal, brick wall, and one removable soundproof panel wall, complete with ceiling upon which many builders were making building noises. The potential for constructing a studio with good sound dynamics was huge.

The first week comprised mainly of interviewing developers, GMs, and local players. We covered much ground, talked to such celebrities as TomB, Tuxford, Hammer, various senior GMs, and witnessed a beautiful moment shared between Arachvoid and Raem Civrie. We heard many things we had to edit out, and one of the devs also managed to let slip his main and then had to beg/order us not to release the information. Many laughs were had at Mxmus' rant on WCS, and Oveur walking past pretending to bare himself to the camera was certainly funny for the first four or five times. By the twentieth however...

WHO NEEDS REHEARSALS?

Days of getting up early, walking to CCP, interviewing, editing and rendering were ended by the arrival of the rest of the crew (Urban, Ifni, Xod, Xman Stavros and JusJ4ck). At about the same time we started building the set. Out went the super-long table, the comfortable chairs, and the startled CCP members trying to have a meeting. In came about five miles of black soundproofing cloth, the gorgeous Catalyst backdrop from the 2004 Fanfest, and almost three tons of scaffolding. Tripods, cables, tripods, microphones, and a very nice little glass table from the CEO's office meant it was almost finished, but it needed something more. So off came my shirt (calm down ladies), and we bought a load of wood, some screws, and went about building a couple of free-standing boards over which we could drape EVE banners. Perfect.

The first three days of broadcasting would have me hosting the first half of the daytime programming, with my co-host JusJ4ck swapping in

THE WHO'S WHO OF EVETV

(main table, from left to right)



STAVROS
Not-so-expert, despoiler
of the EVE community.
Foosball Rating: 1



XMAN
Commentary team,
lover of 'toast'.
Foosball Rating: unrated



XOD
Commentary team,
lead statistician.
Foosball Rating: unrated



HINIK
Cameraman,
all-round hunk.
Foosball Rating: 8.5



XYLIANA
Director, in charge of
shouting at people.
Foosball Rating: 3



SPIRALJUNKIE
Host, eater of yoghurts,
mostly shirtless.
Foosball Rating: 7.5



URBAN MONGRAL
Streaming guru,
propositionist.
Foosball Rating: 6.5



JUSJ4CK
Part-time host, purveyor
of smutty jokes.
Foosball Rating: unrated



LEMONDE (not pictured below)
Our man at CCP,
full of content.
Foosball Rating: 8



IFNI (not pictured below)
Expert, EveTV pinup
(calm down, ladies),
Foosball Rating: 8

to fill the late slot. Stavros and Ifni were booked in as permanent couch residents, with a third slot being open to a guest pundit – devs, local players, random hobo men off the street. Hinik would always be sat behind a camera, filming our lovely mugs, with Xyliana sat in the gallery mixing in the various feeds. Xod and Xman were sat nearby, with a PC each, watching the fights as they happened, sometimes commenting on what was going on, but usually on what wasn't. What certainly made their job easier was that CCP had a special version of the client made, whereby targeted ships would be split into two teams on each side of the screen, and a dedicated cameraman (normally Mephysto) would do the in-game work for them.

On sound we'd have Sigg (the man from whom we hired all the equipment) – a consummate professional, and a damn good bloke to boot. He and I developed a lovely relationship, purely because of the number of times he had to come round and re-clip my microphone on. Lastly, but certainly not leastly, came Urban Mongral. Xyliana would have mixed everything into a high-quality feed, which would then be piped into one last PC which would then compress, encode, and do other magical things to the stream, eventually sending it off to the servers who would then re-distribute it all.

There were no lengthy rehearsals, no tortuous make-up sessions and no scripted one-liners (though in the case of JJ we're not too sure on those last two). We sat down on set for the first time one day before we went live, to get a feel for the space, and to see how it felt to be in front of three very big lenses. A couple of half-hour sessions were enough to ease us into the swing of things, and we all went home fairly early to get some sleep – we were going to be on air at 14:00 the next day.

ALRIGHT ON THE NIGHT

We'd tested the microphones, the cameras, and the computers. We'd tested the stream. In fact, we had more than 200 viewers just watching us set stuff up: the viewing link had been handed out to about a dozen 'trustworthy' people, and within minutes, everyone had it. Then suddenly, we heard Xyliana, doing what she does best – shouting at us. "Come on guys, we're live in 10 minutes. Places everyone. Places!"

And then, as if by magic, the cameras went live, I was introducing EveTV to the viewers, greeting our experts and guests, and talking about the next match. Ifni was a marvel of self-effacing knowledge, Stavros always pushing his caustic humour as far as it could go (and every now and then, a little further). It didn't seem as if 15 minutes had gone by as we handed over to the in-game commentary, but the excitement at what we'd just done was palpable, and we started talking over each other the moment the mics were turned off. Cue more shouting from Xyliana – we could be heard on the commentary stream.

A word about our communications system. Many TV Studios will have headphones and microphone systems for cameramen, floor





The team's level of technical prowess behind a lens helped things run far more smoothly than anyone was really expecting...

managers and so on to communicate with each other, and the director, or floor staff, running around passing messages. We had a low-budget, hi-tech solution. Seeing as we didn't have a voice-comm system for everyone (like those little in-ear things that TV presenters wear) we decided to do the whole thing via IRC. So the host had IRC, the director, the commentators, LeMonde and Veritech. The only person who didn't have access to it was camera monkey Hinik, who didn't really need it on account of being asleep most of the time. When I refer to shouting, sometimes it's Xyliana getting on a microphone and telling us off verbally (as it happened when we burst into giggles at some on-air Stavros filth), but most of the time it refers to the excessive use of caps lock in IRC.

The first three hours literally flew by, and the in-game action provided us with more than enough to talk about during the interim periods as the next bout was set up. In fact, it was often the case that we had to cut short our discussions to introduce the next match, as we kept running over the allotted time in our enthusiasm to share our 'wisdom' with the viewers.

Half time came, with the fruit of our first week's labour, the pre-records, being aired. Then back to the studio for three more hours with a different host, a different guest, but the same two delicious experts, then somehow JJ was waving goodbye to the audience, and day one was finished. Cue much screaming, cheering, and generally running around CCP offices, as well as many developers coming in and shaking hands/hugging/attempting to pull one's trousers down depending on levels of alcohol ingested. To top off an already fantastic day, Mxmus had ordered about four hundred pizzas from Domino's, which went a long way to replace any weight lost through sweating while on set (please ladies, remain calm).

SPONSORED BY PIZZA AND QUAFE

At this point I could describe every one of the six days but, instead, let me list a few of the major happenings...

- Mistaking Morsus Mihi for a role-playing alliance and then sticking to our guns even though we knew we were wrong, and accidentally starting an in-game war between alliances because of it.
- Stavros drinking a bottle of three-year-old Quafe for a free BDCI-sponsored carrier.

- The misuse of the word 'withdraw', causing about three solid minutes of uncontrollable giggling.

- Xman saying the word 'toast' about seven times per fight, being picked up on it, and then throwing a hissy fit.

- Turning up at midday to see LeMonde asleep on the studio couch.

But above all things, and I'd hope that everyone involved would agree, hitting more than 10,000 concurrent connections (and that means well over 10,000 viewers - I know the connection at my house had five people watching off one computer) was probably the most gratifying.

It was an incredible opportunity, and it must be said that every single person who came out was integral to the success of the event. We were very lucky in that people were capable, but also really enthusiastic about EVE and EveTV, and it's fair to say that this enthusiasm showed through in the production, resulting in an excellent first time for this fledgling idea.

With a bit of luck, and with Fanfest almost upon us and a new Championship lined up for early December, we can look forward to further EveTV outings, and a lot more besides. ☐

THE BEST FROM THE REST

URBAN

"The best bit about being in Iceland came at the end of the first day's broadcast. Behind the scenes it had been a nightmare but when we heard the devs cheering their heads off as the credits rolled, it was all worth it."

HINIK

"I came out of the studio on a bio break when a fight was happening, only to turn a corner and find all the devs, beers in hand, watching a wall-mounted projection of our broadcast while cheering loudly at the combatants. It was a very proud moment."

IFNI

"Coming from the UK, my initial reaction to Iceland is the decent beer and beautiful women. But honestly, Iceland is great because of the atmosphere. Relaxed, calm, unhurried and above all embedded in a beautiful country."

SPIRALJUNKIE

"We'd been out drinking with the devs for a few hours when Hilmur, the CEO of CCP, decided that he could no longer live with his staff's outrageous behaviour. He fired them all, and gave them contact details for the local McDonald's. All on camera, of course."

XOD

"Iceland was far and above what I had imagined it would be. The real highlight of the trip was the interaction we had with the devs and seeing first-hand that CCP is truly all about the community."

XYLIANA

"I still remember hours before the first broadcast, where I peeked into IRC and saw hundreds of members in the #EveTV channel; even more amazing were the hundreds of viewers already jacked in to the test stream, several hours before the actual show time."



DARWIN'S CONCEPTION

GAMES CAN INSPIRE FANS TO UNDERTAKE INCREDIBLE PROJECTS, SOME CHARMINGLY AMATEUR, OTHERS PROFESSIONAL-GRADE EPICS. DARWIN'S CONTRAPTION IS ONE OF THE LATTER, YET TWO YEARS ON IT'S FAR FROM COMPLETE. TIME TO FIND OUT WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON...



TEXT: ZAPATERO

When our esteemed Editor first saw the Evolution trailer, he became very agitated, but at least he didn't wet himself. Not so much that anyone would notice at any rate.

Victoria Beckham hit the ripe old age of 31 and, in New York, the world's largest pillow fight took place (in terms of participants, you understand, rather than a fight between giant down-filled sacks), but otherwise 17th April, 2005 was just an ordinary day on planet Earth. Then news hit of a short two-minute video. No ordinary video, mind, but an EVE-Online video – one of a growing number of painstakingly-produced creations put together after countless hours of carefully choreographed in-game footage had been condemned to hard drive. At least, that's what was assumed. Those who saw it quickly realised that the unnamed Evolution-endorsed film wasn't some regular FRAPS-assisted production, but a fully-realised CGI spectacular. EVE ships of a detail never before seen fought in a dogfight so spectacularly, teasingly brief that the forum post that announced it was quickly bombarded with all manner of gagging praise.

Within an hour a good proportion of the forum courtiers – Hakera, LoxyRider, Seleene, Trooper B99, Viceroy, MOOstradamus – had all added to the growing tribute. One viewer claimed to have broken an arm after watching the soon-to-be-called Evolution Trailer. Two others (one believed to be a Dev) even admitted to releasing a small amount of pee-pee into their underpants, such was the effect the showing had. The weak of bladder, like everyone else, watched in slack-jawed awe, and posted as much. To date, the thread in the 'Videos' channel of the EVE Information Center remains one of the most popular and flame-free in EVE forum history – although interestingly it took the ubiquitous HippoKing almost a year to pass comment and Dark Shikari, self-proclaimed forum warrior, still hasn't added his name to the near-800 replies.

THAT WAS THEN...

The excitement has turned to a muted indifference since then of course, for it's now 18 months since the Evolution Trailer was first released. In that time we've heard of plans to produce a trilogy of short CGI movies that would incorporate a cast of human characters and rebuilt EVE ships. However, to date nothing has been released bar a short second teaser

From last year's Fanfest and a clutch of images that appeared in the last issue of E-ON. The plan was to complete all three films before Fanfest 2006. You read this, very probably, as EVE's premier gathering draws near and yet still not a single second of footage has been publicly revealed for months.

"When the project started I tried to put a release date on it but it proved to be a futile effort," says Bob Blosser, aka Biff Steel, the Project Leader of the Evolution movie. "I'm of the mindset that it gets done when it gets done. To me art should have no deadlines and in my opinion this is turning into a masterpiece."

No arguments there. Some of the images are certainly good enough to hang in galleries, but why has the journey from trailer to final draft been so fraught with complication and delay?

"When I made the first trailer I had no idea that it would get as big as it is today," Bob admits. "It was simply something fun for me to do and I was more or less just messing around; I didn't really take it all that seriously, if I'm honest. I had no pressure on me to get things done and no one knew that it even existed until the day I released it. I never expected the response to be so big. I simply thought it would be another EVE movie that would have its 15 minutes of fame and be quickly forgotten."

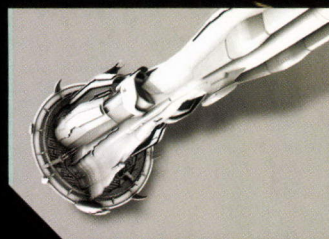
BEYOND PIXAR

Darwin's Contraption, the first part of the planned trilogy, remains elusively distant, so distant that perhaps it's reasonable to assume that the movie is no closer to release than it was a year ago. The lengthy wait, ironically, has everything to do with the oh-so-long-ago first-released trailer. Not only had that two-minute warning of the impending wait impressed thousands of EVE players, it had acted as a magnet and drawn out movie and CGI professionals from within the EVE player community who arguably knew more about computer-assisted animation than its creator.

Blosser, a professional 3D animator for the past 11 years, was already working with talented individuals prior to the release, among them a NASA aerospace engineer and an audio effects wizard who has been literally 'out in the field' sampling for new audio effects to grace the finished movies. The trailer hit and quickly their ranks were swollen with enough talent to churn out a decent *Titan A.E.* sequel.

"I saw the first trailer on the forums and was very impressed with the project," remembers

From the first teasing trailer – an effect you don't see every day in EVE



The team has had to re-build EVE's ships from scratch and work is still ongoing



Jan Cilliers, who away from EVE is a professional composer. "I had always thought that EVE would be a good conduit for a great CG space narrative... this is precisely what 'Wildcard' [Blosser] was doing."

Willem van Biljon, whose work has graced these pages before in some of the *Testflight* ships, was drawn to the project when he started work on his own CGI EVE film. "I was looking for some help with animation and special effects," he says, "and was referred to a link to the first trailer. Bob and I both needed what the other had to offer, so a collaboration was offered, and since *Darwin's Contraption* was further along in production we decided that it will be finished first before moving on to my own movie project – *By Any Means*."

WATCHING THE BOX

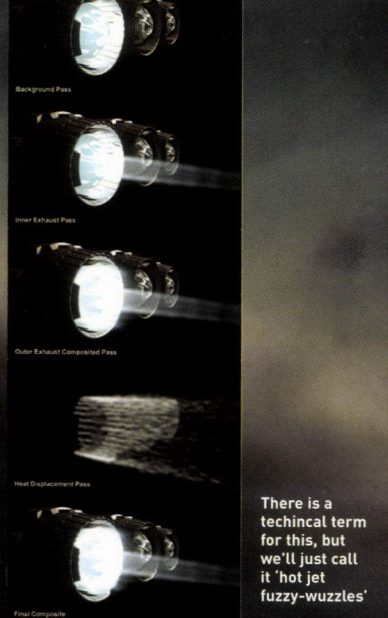
The inspiration behind *Darwin's Contraption* isn't hard to locate. The visual look is 100 per cent EVE and the storyline is based upon the history of Evolution, one of EVE's premier corps. "EVE's open-ended

COMPETITION KILLER

Although there are plenty of FRAPS-assisted movies around, there are very few CG efforts, so whenever one is announced, Blosser gets in his Borg Cube and assimilates the people behind it. He does admit to being a big fan of TheKiller8's Flash movies (www.student.ru.nl/martindevillers/tk8_outgame.html), saying: "His stuff is incredible, funny as hell. He's easily one of the most unique creators of EVE-based movies today."

OLD	OLD	ACHURA
<p>Details</p> <p>Intelligence 7</p> <p>Charm 6</p> <p>Perception 5</p> <p>Memory 5</p> <p>Willpower 5</p> <p>Coldair Rigate I</p> <p>Small Hybrid Unit 1</p> <p>Engineering I</p>	<p>Clive</p> <p>Intelligence 5</p> <p>Charm 6</p> <p>Perception 9</p> <p>Memory 4</p> <p>Willpower 6</p> <p>Coldair Rigate I</p> <p>Small Hybrid Unit 1</p> <p>Mobile Launching Cap 1</p> <p>Hot V</p>	<p>Achura</p> <p>Intelligence 25</p> <p>Charm 0</p> <p>Perception 28</p> <p>Memory 16</p> <p>Willpower 19</p> <p>Coldair Rigate V</p> <p>Engineering V</p> <p>Hot V</p>

We also got a new slightly improved blood line (only slightly)



BOB BLOSSER'S HOW-TO-MAKE-YOUR-OWN-EVE-MOVIE IN SIX STEPS

#1 – You start off with storyboards, which give you a general idea of what will be in the shot and its general composition.

#2 – You then move on to an animatic of the shot which is more or less a moving storyboard. This establishes the kinetic composition of the shot and how it works with those before and after it. The flow from shot to shot is very important and is addressed at this point. You want to make sure you let the viewer's eye move around in a fluid manner. If done right you'll never notice it.

#3 – Next you do the final animation of the shot. This is where you include things like lighting, detailed animation keyframing and certain special effects that are sometimes easier to do than in post.

#4 – Now comes rendering. We render everything in passes (think of a render pass as a layer in Photoshop) because we can adjust certain elements in the shot much more easily and it saves time in rendering. For example, if the reflection on a ship's hull has to be enhanced you only have to re-render that one element without doing everything else. This saves us a lot of time.

#5 – Once everything is rendered it gets composited together into one shot. This is where we adjust the individual passes to make them work together. Colour correction, additional effects, and some fine tuning of the camera's movement all happen at this stage.

#6 – Now that we have a composited shot, it goes into editing. Sound effects, music and clipping (adjusting the length of the shot) happen here. This is also the stage where we put all the individual shots together to make the final movie. Once the movie is edited we compress it into its final format.

gameplay is unique and I think suited to only the most hardcore of gamers," says Blosser. "Coupled with its very impressive graphics this movie is, in many ways, a tribute to that hardcore appeal and will hopefully serve as a testament to the drive and determination of both the developers and community who make EVE what it is today."

"The EVE Chronicles artwork has been an awesome reference – perhaps the most important," adds John Augar, the team's 3D modeler and texture artist (and E-ON *Testflight* regular illustrator, of course). "The in-game graphics, though aging, are full of great examples too, when you observe them up close and attempt to recreate high-resolution versions; it's much more appreciable how much thought and effort CCP has put into everything."

EVE's dark, worn metallic look, prompted various other sci-fi staples as inspirational media. *Blade Runner's* neo-industrial environments, *Ghost In The Shells* incredible background matte paintings, and *Alien Resurrection's* beautifully lit shots, for example. "Old sci-fi books have also been very helpful for creating odd extra details on the models," adds Augar. "Stuart Cowley's *Spacebase* series, for instance. With texturing, I've taken loads of photographs of metals in various states of wear and tear: sides of vans, 50's and 60's concrete buildings, bulldozers, telephone exchange boxes, etc. These are then pulled into Photoshop and treated to simulate the materials and objects of EVE."

"I would say the visual styling behind the new *Battlestar Galactica* series has been closest to the styling that I want for this project," says Jan Cilliers, "but I am sure we are all pulling hundreds of sub-conscious images from everything we have all seen to date. *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, *Serenity*, *Starship Troopers*... pretty much any film that takes place in space that you can think of."

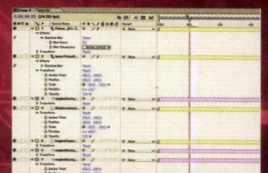
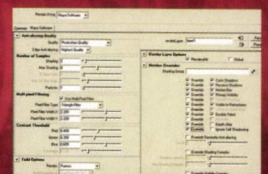
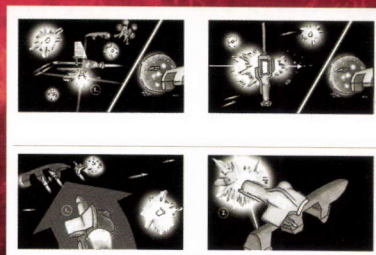
BATTLE OF THE TIME ZONES

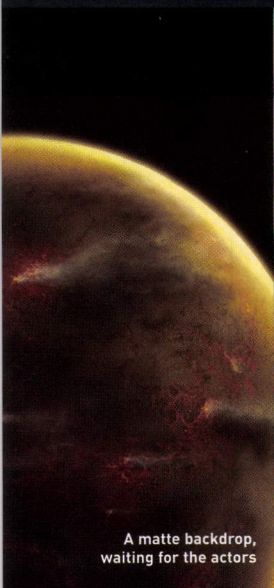
If the inspirations are obvious, the motivation to complete the movie is less easy to find. For close to two years, Blosser has been working on it in his spare time and, increasingly, his role has been one of administration and management which, as much as it is needed, has also served to frustrate. "At first this project consumed me and that was not a good thing for many reasons," he laments. "These days I try and pace myself and limit work to a few hours a day. I realized there is no rush to get this movie done and since then I have begun to have fun with it again, which is the reason I started the project in the first place."

"Quite often there is little time spare in the weekday evenings," says Augar of the time he allows for the movie when he isn't working on his commercial animation projects. "It's one of those things that you can't pick up for just five minutes, you need to spend a good few hours per session to make any headway."

Despite distractions, like having real lives, jobs, wives and girlfriends, finding time to work on the project hasn't been too much of a problem. Instead a major issue has been one of distance between the various team members. "I live in Cleveland, Ohio," says Blosser. "Other people in the States live in LA, Maryland and Arkansas. We also have three people from the UK, one formerly in South Africa now living in Iceland (since landing a job with CCP), one in Canada and another in Australia."

Whilst communication hasn't been a problem thanks to the ubiquitous MSN and TeamSpeak, the relative speed of communication due to different times zones has certainly been an issue. "I would say G





A matte backdrop, waiting for the actors

Although the first trailer has been superseded many times, it's still an impressive piece of animation



The final movie will feature voice-acting talent and new original audio effects, but no human avatars

“If this project was in a production office we could have finished it off in around six weeks,” says Cilliers. “This would require us to all be in the same room, in the same time zone with full days available to work on it. Sometimes when people are away from work it can take days to get the answers and the elements we are looking for. This has been the main factor in the amount of time everything has taken.”

“A great deal of time has been spent developing working relationships and a production pipeline between fellow members,” adds John Augar. “Before joining, I didn't know any of these guys, and when working collaboratively, issues of compatibility between each others' systems need ironing out. The 3DS Max to Maya bridge for models created in 3D Studio and animated by other members in Maya took a lot of tweaking to get just right.”

OUT-EVEING EVE

Apart from storyboarding the original concept and laying the foundations for how the team would work together, a lot of time has been spent rebuilding EVE's ships to appear more realistic and add effects that are beyond the current in-game engine. New effects like warp trails, ship collisions, visual hull damage, visible artillery fire and shield reflections will be enough to have any EVE player green with envy at not being able to enjoy such visuals in-game, but they are necessary tools in providing a convincing drama that is distinct from everyday EVE Online.

“We're able to put in more details than can be seen on the current in-game models, and that is great fun,” says Augar. “Adding hatches, gizmos and piping to help give the viewer a sense of scale. I can appreciate the graphical perspective of the windows the ships have, without them it's impossible to see how truly massive the ships are. We're hoping the additional detail being worked in for the movie versions will help emphasize that to the audience.”

One group who's been keen to see progression with regards to ship detailing and effects is CCP who, early on – before the release of the original trailer – gave its blessing for the movie project to go ahead.

“When I realized it was possible to extract

NEW EFFECTS LIKE WARP TRAILS, SHIP COLLISIONS, VISUAL HULL DAMAGE, VISIBLE ARTILLERY FIRE AND SHIELD REFLECTIONS WILL HAVE ANY EVE PLAYER GREEN WITH ENVY AT NOT BEING ABLE TO ENJOY SUCH VISUALS IN-GAME

the ship models from the game I knew I had to get permission to move forward,” says Bob. “When CCP gave me the okay it was very interested in seeing updates and hearing progress reports on the project. This still continues today and every now and then I give the guys there a taste of what's to come, with production stills and test animations for some of the effects that will be in the movie. In return CCP has always been there to help answer questions I have about how certain things are structured, which really saves me a lot of time.”

FAMILY TIES

Understandably, very few members of the team have time to *play* much EVE; instead, much of their time in-game is spent studying ships and taking screenshots for reference. Given that they work on the movie every day, rather unsurprisingly some family and friends take a dim view of the project. “They think I'm a geek who plays too many computer games. This is just an extension,” laughs Chris Fitzsimmons, a relatively new member of the team who's working on the script and dialogue.

“My family would be whinging more if I was just playing games,” adds John Augar, “so I'd say they're relatively happy. They love looking at the latest output and becoming art critics all of a sudden!”

Bob Blosser picks up the confessions: “Some of them think I'm crazy for even trying something like this, but most are very impressed with what we have already accomplished. People who know me know that I always have my hands in projects like this, so it really came as no surprise when I told them about this one.”

Although the progression on the project has been slower than they would've been liked, and despite periods of frustrating stagnation (those pesky real lives again), as fan projects go, it's perhaps more incredible that the team is still largely together. In fact, the team is now larger than ever. Blosser may have lost a few people to real-life and to CCP (and lost a few hours of work thanks to the incessant niggling from a certain magazine), but despite all this, he wouldn't change a thing.

“I have learned so much from everyone involved in this project,” he says. “Anyone that works in the 3D industry knows that it's always a learning process and the best way to learn is from people more talented than yourself. I've been very fortunate to surround myself with people like this. I truly feel honored to be in the position I'm in and to be working with such talented people.”

What they are making is far beyond anything that has been attempted in the EVE video community and the high expectations everyone has of this movie will no doubt be exceeded when it's done. “I've always been a dreamer,” Blosser adds. “I set my goals high and work to achieve them. I live by the motto ‘Live life never asking what if?’. As a testament to that, one of the modelers on this project got a job with CCP based on his work for us. That's something I'm very proud of!”

WHEN IT'S DONE

Although it was due to be shown at Fanfest 2006, the release of *Darwin's Contraption* has been changed to ‘soon’. Pushed further, Blosser is hoping to complete the short film next year, “before the end of the decade, for sure.” The final resolution of the movie will be 852x480 with 5.1 surround sound. There are no plans to release a DVD, although if CCP agreed to it Blosser would be all for it. “For now though I'm more concerned with getting it finished,” he adds only half-jokingly.

All images are work-in-progress and do not represent the completed scenes from the film. Also, no animals were harmed in the making of this feature.

THE **EDGE** FOUNDATION



CAYTLYN ROSE



PLAYER PROFILE

NAME:	Caytlyn Rose
CORPORATION:	Celestial Horizon [CLS]
POSITION:	Director, General Officer
ALLIANCE:	Ascendant Frontier [ASCN]
SPECIALITY:	Resource collecting and allocation
SECURITY RATING:	1.3
MOST LIKELY TO SAY:	"Anyone got some chocolate?" followed by "Lets go mine!"
LEAST LIKELY TO SAY:	"I want to shoot something."



☞ "Well, my name is Caytlyn Rose, I'm about five feet and four inches tall... the rest you can tell from the photograph." Despite describing herself as a small-town Gallente girl, Caytlyn Rose has an accent that is very difficult to place. Somewhat distant of the core systems, yet not quite backspace Everyshore either.

Typically – or perhaps stereotypically – she appears unsure and perhaps slightly wary why anyone might want to take an interest in her, yet she's outwardly friendly to the point that you'd hardly know she was a hardened, deep-space miner and highly skilled industrialist.

"I'm from a relatively small family," she continues, "one who has had the great fortune to find work with one of the best corporations I have come across." Caytlyn Rose, a director in Celestial Horizon, once harboured aspirations of being a singer but now revels in the minutiae of keeping her comrades fully stocked up with all the hardware they need.

"I mainly build Battleships and ammunition for my corporation and alliance, supplying good-quality products at better than good-quality prices in deep O.O space. When I'm not organizing build queues, I mine – I find there is nothing more relaxing than spending a good day amongst the 'roid fields."

ONLY THE CRUMBLIEST

As well as a love for asteroids, Rose hides another shameful secret. She names her ships after confectionery. Her Fenrir is called The Uber Cadbury and her Hulk, Mackinaw and Skiff have similarly curious names that might pass for shameless sponsorship should they be repeated here.

But it's the Luxury Flake of which she is most proud and for which she is most famous – a ship she never even knew existed until she discovered it sitting in her hangar one day.

Owned mainly by distinguished government leaders (of which there are few) and only those in constant favour with clients who commission their construction, Rose's OpuX luxury yacht is one of just a handful currently in active service.

"It was a present from a cousin in celebration of my engagement to Ramius Montagne. We were having a very quiet party – I was given a key and told to go have a look in my hangar. So I went down and there she was – perhaps the most unique ship I had ever seen."

As we're taken around the interior of the vessel, it's clear that Rose's mystery benefactor spared no expense with the decoration. Royal purple and silver is the predominant colour scheme (chosen by Rose), with plush carpets that make the various chambers appear almost like presidential suites.

"The furniture is all genuine timber – very hard to get sometimes," says Rose as she slides past an impressive, heavily lacquered table. "The rich oak colours really set everything off."

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Rose recounts a recent tour of ASCN space in her then-recently acquired vessel, mentioning that as well as being a suitable ship in which to spend a spare weekend, it's also a capable ship for hauling items that might not otherwise be suitable for a common cruiser. Why she might want to haul trade goods in a ship worth more than an entire regional supply of all trade items combined was not forthcoming, but it's clear Rose is happy to take risks in her ship, even if she'd not be best pleased to lose it to a pirate ambush.

"I suppose it's possible," she says of any potential loss, "but a pirate would have to get through the entirety of the ASCN fleet and manage to catch me flying her. I did have a close call when I took her to Empire

☞ As well as a love for asteroids, Rose hides another shameful secret. She names her ships after confectionery

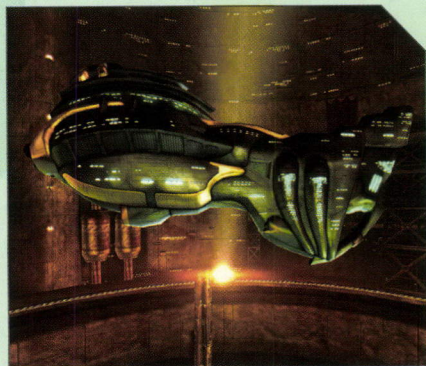
space for a photo opportunity, but the quick thinking actions of both my escort and Concord saved the day."

The close-call in question was a recent meeting of what she calls the OpuX Owners' Club, prior to which she managed to track down the only other known owner of an OpuX. Given the value of such ships, and the wishes of many to take them out, some negotiation was needed to convince the other owner to meet up.

"I'm fairly certain Voogru and I are the only two," muses Rose. "It's possible that there is another one out there. Mine has been one of the best-kept secrets around for several months now and I suppose someone else could do the same. It's not as if the existence of more makes mine any less special. She is a fine ship and I wouldn't want to part with it for any price. She is a fantastic ship to fly. I think the appeal to others is the rarity – for me she is a treasured gift from a good friend."

Rose would like the newly formed OpuX Owners' Club to meet again some day. She welcomes all owners to get in touch, but warns that should you not be genuine, she has friends in high places. ☞

Rose says the girls who serve aboard the Luxury Flake are fully-dressed, most of the time



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➡ "Well, that was worth a whole lotta nothin'."

The ordinarily exuberant Avi Tarken's voice dripped with disappointment as it crackled half-heartedly over her gang communication network. As though mirroring her state of mind with subtle manoeuvres, Avi's unwieldy, seventeen hundred-tonne Kestrel Frigate – overloaded with half again that mass in trade supplies – seemed to almost slouch.

"You can't win them all, rookie." The reply came from Onan Dom-Dussuth, young Avi's trade Wing Commander. The aged Ni-Kunni took his place beside Avi's vessel. "The market ebbs and flows. Sometimes you ride the wave, and sometimes the wave rides you." Onan's attention turned to the third captain in the gang.

"Come on, Karn. Let's get out of the Suck and go home."

With those words, a third Kestrel emerged from the station orbiting the eighth moon of Altbrard IX. Altbrard was a neglected backwater system in Molden Heath, a region colloquially referred to as 'the Suck' due to floundering markets and widespread poverty. Nevertheless, when word came down the traders' grapevine that the CONCORD facility located there had put out massive buy orders for small arms and advanced electronics, they were quick to capitalize. Loading their ships to the brim, they set out for Altbrard.

They were not quick enough.

By the time the three entrepreneurs arrived, the orders had been filled. They caught the tail end of a massive freighter departing the system just as they crossed the gate. The hazardous trip into pirate-infested Minmatar space was largely for nothing.

"There goes any hope of managing the down-payment on that bloody hauler this week," Karn-Enas Paskisen lamented. The Caldari had his heart set upon a second-hand Badger cargo tug, an acquisition that would have boosted the three traders' income immeasurably.

Onan chuckled, almost knowingly. "God rewards the patient, Karn! He also punishes greed."

"A little greed never hurt anyone."

Avi smiled in her capsule, her lips shut tight to avoid another taste of ectoplasm. It had been months since she first burst from Kisogo station, naïve and idealistic to a fault. It was not long after that she first encountered Onan in an asteroid belt, supervising a small omber mining operation. Kind words and stories exchanged, she was elated when the Ni-Kunni offered her a position in his start-up venture. Since then she had made her mark in the tiny corporate entity, proving herself an able trader and resource harvester.

Her ship, moving in tandem with those of Karn and Onan, lurched through stargate after stargate. The going was slow, all three Kestrels gutted internally to expand their cargo holds, thereby sacrificing a considerable chunk of their spryness. Still, they were cheap, easily replaced, and could hold their own in a fight. A recollection made Avi quietly grateful for her wing-mates, whom not two weeks prior placed their lives on the line when a pirate destroyer somewhere in the Suck decided to pick a fight. Their furious barrage of rockets drove off the interloper, and spared Avi her first resurrection as a clone – an eventuality she was not looking forward to.



Karn-Enas Paskisen was the first to come to her rescue that fateful day. Avi had developed a particular fondness for the lanky, camouflage-tattooed Civire. She learned of his past and service with the Caldari Navy, where he served as a ground-pounder – a marine support gunner. She eagerly absorbed every syllable of his frequently regaled war stories, and empathized fully with his reasons for retirement from service – as Karn had revealed to her in a moment that could almost be called intimate, he grew weary of hands-on killing long ago.

On the flip side of the coin there was Onan. To Avi, he was almost a caring grandfather, and a complete anathema to the virulently Caldari Karn. A pacifist to a fault, the devout Ni-Kunni had even hesitated with his fire when Avi came under attack. He said it was the first time he had used his weapons in anger, and Avi refused to blame him for the delay – his mere arrival at the firefight was enough to send the pirates packing. The soft-spoken Onan kept mostly to himself, reluctant to delve into his past with the openness displayed by Karn, though the Caldari once swore that he glimpsed a legion of long-healed whip scars upon the sage man's back. Avi and Karn agreed that they would avoid the topic of slavery altogether when speaking with Onan.

The old Ni-Kunni brought with him another asset however, one that saw the three adventurers outfitted with powerful Kestrel Frigates within days of joining his corporation. He kept his ears to the ground, regularly catching wind of lucrative trade routes, hidden deposits of pristine ore, or abandoned ships ripe for salvage. Sometimes these leads fell through, as they did this day, but on occasion Avi found her wallet swelling with hard-earned credits. The others frugally saved their income, while Avi made sure to send a sizeable portion to her family back home.

"Sooooo..." Onan cooed, his hoary, whiskey voice laden with ill-contained excitement. "How would you two like to make up tenfold for that botched run just now?"

Avi perked. "Treasure?" Onan nodded.

"What's this, what's this?" queried Karn.



"Might be another wild goose chase, but that hasn't stopped us before. We're in the region, so I figured we'd take a look. I have it on good authority, from a fairly reliable scanner jockey I have relied upon in the past, that there's a cruise ship out there ripe for the picking. The Bellerophon."

"I think I've heard of it," chimed Avi.

"Not surprising. She was the Endless Corporation's flag cruise liner. She was sold to Far Star Tours when Endless went belly up, and then went missing. It seems she's not missing anymore."

"Where is she?" Karn asked.

"That's the tricky part. My source located the ship adrift inside a dust cloud. He seemed wary of taking a closer look, so this might not be a milk run. He did provide coordinates to get us to the general area; however, I am not sure how accurate it will be. But you know what they say about cruise ships..."

"That they're floating repositories of riches?" The grin in Karn's voice was audible now.

"In a nutshell. If she was abandoned it's likely we'll find the last passengers' belongings, perhaps a solid nav-sys or shipboard AI. Not to mention luxury food! I bet none of you have had long-limb roe before!"

+++

It stretched beyond the limited focus of Avi's camera drones, an angry cyclopean cloud tinged with ash and crimson. The locals called it the Maw, and for the most part gave the red blot of hydrogen gas a wide berth, eager to sow rumours of pirates and creatures dwelling within. The three explorers

Ⓔ gave these little heed, for such stories were often spread to discourage salvage operators from discovering hidden riches.

"I'm not picking anything up yet."

Three rotating sensor beams scythed through the micro-nebula, stretching a mere two astronomical units across. Partly obscured by thick lanes of dust, the three found themselves relying on intermittent sensor pings to shift about the cloud, using each other as points of triangulation, occasionally finding the smashed wreckage of an unlucky Frigate or Hauler. Yet, steadily, the pings grew louder.

"Holy shit!"

"Look, there it is!" Karn was beside himself. His voice trailed off. "Would you look at that..."

The gleaming, pristine hulk of the Bellerophon loomed directly ahead. She was nestled in a particularly dense concentration of interstellar gas, such that her aft was partly obscured from sight.

"Okay. Stay sharp here, young ones. Let's do a pass and take a look at her. Check for battle damage. If she got shot down, whoever did it might still be here."

Separating into three leisurely arcs, the Kestrels swooped over the opulent cruise ship's hull, leaving a flowery wake of curling nebular dust behind them. Avi tensed up as she briefly lost sight of Onan in the dust, breathing a sigh of relief and sending a cascade of bubbles from her capsule's re-breather as he emerged from the other side.

Karn radioed in. "Looks clean and clear, Onan. Not a dent."

"Good, good." Onan paused. "All right, check for functional airlocks. Avi, starboard. Karn, port. I'll take the dorsal and ventral."

The Kestrels closed in slowly, their orbits constricting around the cruise liner, and their docking requests going largely un-answered. "Maybe the shipboard AI is down?" Avi suggested.

Karn was clearly the resident hardware expert. "Nah, they generally have their own power supplies. I'm reading power in all these airlocks, but they're not opening. Perhaps they've been sealed?"

"Wait!" Avi exclaimed. "I have a functional one, second from the bow on the starboard. Breathable air is confirmed!"

"Only one? How are we all supposed to use it?" inquired Onan.

"We could daisy chain. It's a bit risky..."

The Kestrel class Frigate possessed two extendable docking ports, one secreted beneath the starboard wing and one beneath the

portside. In emergencies or situations that called for it, numerous ships could be carefully linked together by means of their ports.

The decision made, the three Frigates began to delicately manoeuvre closer together. Karn's Frigate was first, mating with the Bellerophon's sole functional airlock, and extending its other boarding tunnel toward Onan's. His ship in turn joined with Avi's.

"Let's not spend too much time in there. This cloud is a graveyard, and if any debris hits our Frigates while they're daisy-chained, they'll snap off at the airlocks and depressurize. Then we'll be stuck here." At times, Avi felt that the mischievous Karn delighted in terrifying her.

With the three ships now protruding from the flank of the massive Bellerophon, Karn suggested that the Kestrels' power cores be re-routed through the cruise liner's airlock umbilicals. Section by section, her unlit windows and portholes blinked to life, and her emergency beacons began strobing a frantic orange.

"It's aliiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiive!" Avi bellowed comically, her roar sounding more like a cat's meow.

Onan chuckled. "Our first priority should be enabling two more airlocks, so we can dock properly and offload more cargo. After that, we will have ourselves a lovely little scavenger hunt."

"I'll be first in." Karn was always the first in. Though his taste for killing had waned, his ingrained sense of duty had not and the tall Caldari saw himself as something of a bodyguard for Onan and young Avi. "Should I bring the gun?"

If there were one possession from which Karn could be called inseparable, it would be his gun. An impressive piece of hardware, the ex-marine had appropriated it as a parting gift when he retired from the service. The near-sentient, 10mm Tacit Warrior smart gun was also one of the few weapons in the universe capable of talking smack.

Onan pondered – every fibre of his being told him to say no, yet he could hardly expect his comrades to walk blind and unarmed onto a ghost ship. "Yes, bring the gun."

+++

By the time Avi had crossed the length of the three Kestrels, Onan and Karn had assembled a loose perimeter around the Bellerophon's interior airlock. Karn shouldered his impressive weapon.

"Smart gun online."

"Smart gun online. Two hundred rounds available. One implosion grenade available. How are you today, Karn?"

"Great, you?"

"I am ready, willing and able, Karn."

"Good boy."

Avi watched with bemusement. She had seen Karn carry on conversations with that cannon as though it were a person on many occasions. It occurred to her that should it ever break down, Karn would mourn the loss of the gun as though it were a loved one.

The adventurers cautiously made their way through the ship, taking stops to admire the opulence of dining halls and quarters throughout. The Ni-Kunni carried a data-pad with a map of the Bellerophon's innards. Soon, they came upon the central starboard airlock.

Karn approached the airlock control panel. The inner door mechanism sprung to action, but the doors would not budge. "What's wrong with this piece of shit?"

Onan ran his finger down the crack of the doors. "Well, they're not sealed on the inside... perhaps someone welded the other side shut. I wonder what could possibly possess them to do that."

"Think the others are sealed too?" asked Avi with a slight hint of worry.

Onan half-nodded. "Probably. We'll check when we come across them. For now, let's stick together. The bridge is still a way away, and I propose we inspect the cabins and dining areas first."

"I agree," droned the smart gun in its synthetic voice. Karn laughed. "Thanks for your input."

With Karn in the lead and Onan holding the rear, the three ventured deeper into the ship. Her halls were lit bright white, and to all intents and purposes, the Bellerophon was a functioning ship. As they progressed, wall monitors lit up at their presence, and the scavengers updated their portable map with the Bellerophon's detailed internal data.

A drawn out whistle caught Avi's attention, and she noticed that Karn had sidestepped into what appeared to be luxury passenger quarters. She followed him in, and saw that he was standing gaping into an open wooden box. Karn reached in.

"I think this would look beautiful on you," he murmured to Avi, approaching her from behind and gently pulling back her hair. She shivered slightly as the frigid metal of the ornate, bejewelled necklace first touched her skin, and Avi found herself blushing furiously. Karn merely winked and grinned, then promptly returned to shovelling greedy fistfuls of jewellery into his pockets, the jangle of gold and gems echoing through the Bellerophon's empty halls.

"It's freezing in here," she stated absently, rubbing her hands together.

"It's a miracle the life support backups lasted this long," retorted Onan. "Perhaps a blessing, considering we possess no spacesuits."

Karn took a deep breath. "The air is a little thin..."

They ambled leisurely from quarters to quarters, taking their pick of the booty. Karn mostly concentrated on the jewellery and personal possessions of the missing passengers, his every footfall sounding like a bag of coins being jostled. Soon, they returned to the lavish dining hall,



with its hundreds of brass-belted mahogany tables and chairs, and glorious crystal chandeliers suspended from the ceiling. Each twinkled like a million brilliant stars.

"Huh, that's kind of odd." Avi and Karn turned to Onan, who was pointing at one of the tables. There, upon expensive porcelain platters, lay the ashen remains of prepared food, some meals with forks still sticking out of them.

Onan continued. "Looks as if they had to leave in a hurry. Avi, during your pass on starboard, did you notice any missing life-pods?" Avi shook her head no. "Karn?"

"A couple missing on my side. Not enough to account for a full passenger complement."

"And the capsule itself?"

"It's still in there."

Onan's brow furrowed slightly. "Perhaps the AI can tell us more. We'll ask it later; for now, let's check the food stores." Excitedly, Onan produced a large, sturdy duffel bag from his backpack and unfolded it. Haute cuisine was a rare treat for the oft-neglected bellies of capsuleers. Already, the old Ni-Kunni was rummaging through the refrigerators and pantry. With a triumphant whoop, he produced a small tin can, and began twisting it open.

"Here, try these."

Avi dipped a finger in the tin of long-limb eggs, scooping a quantity and sniffing at it gingerly before putting it in her mouth. "Mmm, this is great. I can see what all the talk is about. Save me some?"

Onan nodded. Emboldened by Avi's willingness to experiment, Karn also picked up a pinch of the priceless eggs and tasted them. His expression froze, and he chewed the roe miserably, as though masticating broken glass.

"How does it taste?" Avi teased.

"About the way you'd expect eggs from an alien's ass to taste." With a sour expression painting his face, Karn gulped the mouthful of roe down. He coughed violently.

"So why'd you eat it, dummy?"

"Because it's expensive." A shrill beep at his side made him flinch in surprise.

"Smart gun is detecting motion, Karn."

The scavengers froze. Onan launched into a quiet stream of expletives, prompting Avi to look to him questioningly. The Ni-Kunni spoke. "If there's anyone else alive aboard this tub, we don't have salvage rights and we'll have to leave everything behind. God fucking damn it."

"Hey now, watch the blasphemies," chided Karn. "It's probably just a Fedo. Smart gun, locate motion source."

"Scan inconclusive. My ATAC-IDMS motion sensor has a limited effective range in enclosed areas. Beyond that range it is limited only to identifying motion, not pinpointing it. I am sorry I cannot be more helpful, Karn."

As the gun spoke, Karn made the universal yap-yap-yap gesture with his free hand. "Smart gun, tacit mode."

"Don't like hearing me talk? Fine." The gun seemed genuinely hurt, but obligingly switched to tacit mode – intended for tactical engagements, this setting limited the weapon's vocal interaction with the owner to brief and concise statements.

"We better check this out. Please, God, let it be a Fedo."

"Maybe it's your scanner jockey, Onan. Perhaps he decided to take a crack at the prize after all."

Onan shook his head. "No, he would have seen our ships docked and radioed in."

His gun at the ready, Karn picked up the pace, forcing Avi and Onan to trot behind him. The opulence of the passenger areas was giving way to a utilitarian motif as they crossed into the crew areas. These were far worse lit, the darkened control rooms and glowing ops panels reminding Karn of the inside of a warship. No doubt passengers were not permitted in here, but confined to the Bellerophon's lavish outward layers.

"Smart gun, motion fix south."

A blip appeared on the gun's mini-screen. With it came the distant clang of metal.

"Did anyone else hear that?" Avi asked, whipping about to face the source of the sound, coming from somewhere in the outer hull layers.

"Sure as hell wasn't a Fedo," replied Karn with trepidation. He turned to Onan. "You want to abort?"

"No, my curiosity has the best of me, I'm afraid. I'd like to investigate further. If we

can just reach the AI core..."

Another clang. Another blip. "Smart gun, multiple motion fix south."

"I've had about enough of this." Karn took off, running toward the motion fix. Avi shouted for him to wait, barely keeping up with the tall Caldari's immense strides. Their footfalls echoed loudly enough that the three were oblivious to the distant clang of metal, now growing in frequency. In under a minute, they arrived before the massive double doors of the engineering section. Just beyond lay two, then three motion blips.

"You guys ready?" Karn assumed a crouched position slightly diagonal of the doors, his weapon readied. He nodded to Onan, who hit the door control panel, prompting the two huge metal slabs to grind apart with a tired wheeze of pistons, releasing a cloud of dust from beyond.

The interior was pitch black. "Smart gun, illumination please."

"Smart gun, illumination active."

The brilliant beam cut into the darkness. The air inside was musty and stale, clearly not having been circulated properly. Dust and fog marred the beam, recently stirred cloudy swirls visible as the light passed over them. There was definitely something moving about in there.

"Hello?" Onan shouted.

No response.

"Anybody in there?" Avi added hesitantly, somewhat hiding behind Karn and his sentient gun, which erupted into frantic beeping.

"Smart gun, proximity alarm."

And then the gun's automatically panning beam came to rest on something in the fog. Something that moved slightly and froze when exposed to the light. Karn tensed, and Avi felt her stomach sink in disappointment. The silhouette appeared to be humanoid.

"Can you hear us in there? We're, ah, salvage workers. Do you have claim to this ship?"

Onan's questions received no reply. "Perhaps we could come to some kind of arrangement, share the bounty between us, that sort of thing? Our ships are small and don't carry much cargo! We won't take much!"

There was no reply from the silhouette. It simply stood there, gaping at them, its features obscured entirely. Avi leaned closer to Karn. "There's something wrong..."

The man-shape lurched forward and what the adventurers saw next turned their veins to ice. He was largely naked, save for scraps of what looked like a crewman's uniform.

His eyes were locked in an unblinking gaping stare – they were the dry eyes of a long dead carcass. Most horrifying, the thing appeared to have suffered either severe cranial atrophy, or massive head wounds – the top of its head was largely absent, and the eyes lay nearly upon its apex, like those of some freakish amphibian. Where there should have been a forehead and scalp, instead there lay a spiny tangle of bizarre exposed electronics, their dim LED lights casting a nightmarish pall upon the advancing corpse.

"Motherfucker! True Slaves! RUN!"

"Smart gun, gyro-stabilizer active."

Onan and Avi did not need to be told twice. Both took off running, the deafening report of Karn's gun at their back. Its thermite-tipped shells exploded viciously against the shambling monstrosity, as it dropped gurgling horribly to the ground, half of its midsection rent apart and innards slicking the deck-plates with filthy, black blood. Karn ran after the other two, but spun around at the sound of sluggishly approaching footsteps, thumbing a switch on the gun's fore-grip. He braced himself against a bulkhead and shouldered the weapon securely.

The recoil of the implosion grenade's propellant shell caught him somewhat off-guard, and it went slightly high. He hadn't fired one in decades, and cursed himself for the amateur mistake. Fortunately the yield of the weapon proved more than adequate. The blast of the grenade first sent the two pursuing ghouls flying end over end from the darkened engineering chamber like broken dolls, then ignited its implosion charge and shredded the flying corpses into garish confetti which was rapidly sucked back into the chamber. This secondary blast shook the entirety of Bellerophon's hull, and prompted Avi to cry out in fright some hundred paces away.

"Smart gun, one hundred and forty five rounds available."

The implosion knocked the wind out of Karn and he took a moment to steady himself before taking off full tilt after Avi and Onan, his pockets still jangling with an overburden of pilfered jewellery. "We need to get back to the airlock!" he shouted ahead of him. The other two stopped and waited for Karn to catch up.

"Smart gun, motion fix north."

"Fuck! They're in front of us!"

"Can we go around?"

Karn grinned, baring his teeth like a Slaver hound. "I'd rather go through."

"Smart gun, proximity alarm."

Avi covered her ears and fell to her knees screaming as the Tacit Warrior belched forth a stream of rounds that cut down two more True Slaves, cutting one in half. Her ears ringing from the weapon's close discharge, she again stood and ran after

➡ The man-shape lurched forward and what the adventurers saw next turned their veins to ice – the dry eyes of a long-dead carcass

⊕ Onan and Karn, both of whom were focused on returning to the airlock.

"I don't believe this. We're at the right one, yeah?"

The trio skidded to a halt as they came to face the airlock. The source of the strange clanging sounds now became terrifyingly apparent as their eyes rested upon the shattered airlock control panel and the numerous monomolecular ram-bolts driven into the doors themselves, preventing them from being opened by any means.

"Use the grenade, Karn! Outer doors are still intact!" shouted Onan.

"Already used it. Besides it wouldn't punch through these. They're space doors," Karn deflected, quietly wishing he had brought more grenades. His attention came to rest on Avi, whose face was white as a sheet. He followed her gaze to the largely intact second True Slave corpse, its abdomen pierced by three or four rounds, but its bizarre cranial implants fully intact. The left eye had rotted away, but the right was fixed on Avi in a loathsome unblinking stare.

"What are these things, Karn? Oh God, what are they?" She was in tears and looked ready to throw up.

"They're called True Slaves. They used to be people once, long ago. They are mad Sansha's children and they've got us trapped in here. That's why it's so cold. They're trying to preserve themselves."

"They mean to turn us into them, little one," Onan grouched. He glanced to the side, and picked up a heavy spanner-wrench lying in the corridor. Karn cast him a surprised glance.

"I thought you were against the use of weapons, Onan. Change of heart?"

"No, my friend... I am against killing. These unfortunate creatures are already dead."

"Smart gun, motion fix south. Smart gun, motion fix west."

"Shit. They're trying to surround us!"

"Then we go east."

Following the gun's compass, they took off in the only direction not dotted with motion blips. They had not taken three steps away from the airlock when the cruise ship shook violently and a deafening sound of tearing metal skewered into their ears. Karn reacted first.

"The window!"

Approaching a porthole near the airlock, Onan craned his neck to look along the side of the ship. His worst fears were instantly confirmed – their three Kestrels had broken away from the airlock. Perhaps they had *been* broken away.

Onan decided. "The bridge. We need to make it to the bridge. It'll have heavy doors, we can seal ourselves in, and we have ample food with us from the kitchen. We'll wait the bastards out."

"Oh good," joked Karn, "more alien ass eggs." He was doing his best to conceal his genuine fear. Being the only one with a lick of combat experience, he knew that if he showed the slightest hint of apprehension now, the other two would likely crumble under stress, starting with Avi.

They encountered no more of the creeping Sansha ghouls on their way to the bridge. Onan was right – massive, foot-thick blast doors, no doubt intended to repel or at least delay a hostile boarding party – protected the chamber. As these wheezed shut behind them, Karn turned to his gun.

"Smart gun, ammo status?"

"Smart gun, one hundred and nine rounds available."

Exhausted from running and gunning, the trio of trapped explorers collapsed panting into the bridge crew's command chairs. Onan opened his sack of food and dug around in it busily, producing three instant-heat food packets and handing them out. He then offered the open bag to Karn, who looked at it with confusion for a moment, before finally cluing in and unloading his haul of shiny baubles into the bag. Now he could move with a bit more freedom and without sounding like a gambling machine hitting jackpot with every step.

The banging came loud and closer now, not at all distant like before. Something was hammering furiously against the massive blast doors. It was not the vibrant cadence of metal hitting metal, but perhaps flesh and bone; a dull and nauseating thump no doubt generated by something that lost all use for pain and nerve endings long ago. Then, as soon as it had started, it stopped.

"I figure they're gonna be at it for a while. Until they get bored or break their arms, whichever comes first." Karn dug into his meal pack. Avi couldn't bring herself to eat.

"What if they don't?"

"We still have a lot of ammo," replied Karn, lying. He knew full well that even on the gun's burst-fire setting, a hundred rounds would last for about five or six of these implacable horrors. After that, they were down to melee, and the last thing Karn wanted was a close-quarters engagement with something that felt no pain. As he glanced toward Onan, he noted his sombre glare returned; clearly, the Ni-Kunni also knew they could not hold out for long, but stayed quiet to spare young Avi the fright.

"Looks as if we're stuck here," stated Onan, finishing his meal pack and striding over to a console. "Might as well find out what the hell happened." He worked the controls, attempting to access the Bellerophon's artificial intelligence.

"Hmm."

"What is it?"

"AI's fried, or at least not responding. Maybe they got to it just now. The captain's log is present however. Quiet down..."

With this, he thumbed the playback button, and the screen in front of him slowly flickered to life. The three gathered around the console as the voice of a man long dead greeted them from beyond.

+++

April 6, 103 EST – Successfully embarked on tour of Minmatar Republic. Passengers having a blast. Our first stop is Matar with a scenic loop around Kulheim's moons.

April 8, 103 EST – Next stop is the hanging statuary of Eram and the Triumphant Resort. One passenger is complaining of food poisoning. I don't know how anyone can eat that long-limb crap. Give me a spicy pot of rassarat any day.

➡ The log disintegrated into a cacophony of guttural screams, the sort a man makes when his flesh is being torn and mangled

April 9, 103 EST – Received faint distress signal from a civilian ship. Pertaining to interstellar law, since we are the closest ship we are duty-bound to offer aid. Some of the passengers expressed displeasure at this, but they're mostly assholes. I'll have the staff shut them up with discount vouchers for their next cruise.

"Wow, pretty casual sounding for a ship captain, isn't he," Avi intoned.

"People who command warships are a bit different from people who command cruise liners," added Karn, half-smirking.

Onan shushed them. "Quiet, it's still playing back."

April 9, 103 EST – We found the source of the distress beacon. A Gallente Incursus Frigate. We were scheduled to loop through Konora system by now and the passengers are getting restless, but damned if I'll pass up a chance to save a countryman in order to appease them. If they want a black hole to gawk at, I'll show them one they won't forget.

The Ni-Kunni chortled. "A Gallente, that explains it."

April 10, 103 EST – We docked with the Frigate and found it deserted. The capsule is empty, I have seven hundred pissed off passengers demanding refunds. This is rapidly turning into the worst cruise this year.

April 11, 103 EST – Forget what I said in the last log entry. This is the worst cruise ever. We were planning to bypass Konora and the Ginnungagap black hole and head straight to Trieste Resort when I received a report of two passengers missing. *Mon dieu!*

April 15, 103 EST – I have declared an emergency aboard Bellerophon and taken her into a dust cloud until we figure out what the *baise* is happening. Three more passengers have gone missing and we're getting erratic reports of systemic power drains and missing components all over the ship. We ran an internal scan and found something odd. The passenger manifest displays five missing people, but also a strange additional unidentified bio-signature we haven't been able to locate. I fear something came aboard from that Frigate. As a precaution I am firing the emergency CONCORD distress beacon and ordering all passengers to prepare for evacuation. The crew will remain behind to facilitate egress. I hope someone is listening.

April 21, 103 EST – This will be my last recording. Those things... they're sealing us in, collapsing bulkheads and welding exterior locks shut. Some of the passengers made it to escape pods, I cannot account for the rest. I cannot abandon my crew. All I know is they're not replying to the ship-wide PA. The number of 'human' bio-signs keeps dropping, and



their numbers keep growing. We have fallen back to the bridge as it's the most secure... wait. *Devereaux!* What the hell? Who opened... oh *merde, merde, merde, MERDE!* They're getting in! Oh god! What are they?

It was at this point that the captain's log disintegrated into a cacophony of anguished guttural screams, the sort a doomed man makes when his flesh is being torn and mangled. The three backed away from the console with a look of stark horror.

"They got in here before... that means they can get in again!"

Only now did they look down to their feet, and saw that they stood not upon deck-plate, but a smattering of dried, ancient gore. Fans of clotted blood adorned nearly every surface, something that escaped notice in the bridge's dim illumination.

There was a bloodbath here.

+++

Cruelly flawless in its timing, the sound of the massive doors being slowly wrenched apart caused the three to leap in fright. Karn's training took over quickly, and he slinked into cover behind a control console, steadying the Tacit Warrior against it. He pointed frantically, wordlessly ordering Avi and Onan to take shelter at the rear of the bridge. The doors cracked ever so slightly, and Karn let loose with a brief burst of fire directly between them. The rounds connected and something made of meat hit the deck with a satisfying thud.

"Smart gun, ninety one rounds available."

Yet still the doors were being pulled open. Bravely, Onan strode over to Karn, disregarding his order to hide. His heavy spanner was held at the ready and the old Ni-Kunni's eyes burned with deadly conviction. Karn admired the old Imperial for his willingness to die.

Avi cried out from the rear of the bridge. "We won't be able to hold them! Didn't you hear the log? There are seven hundred of them on this ship!"

With a final hiss of surrendering pistons the doors gave way, revealing a throng of unsteadily shambling, cranially-absent corpses dotted with LEDs and antennae. Karn took longer this time to steady his aim, the Tacit Warrior's gyrostabilizer aiding in the process considerably. One by one the advancing corpses' heads detonated in a putrid shower of decaying brain matter and arcane electronics. Closer and closer they advanced, some missing entire sections of their skulls and some missing everything from the neck up – a testament to Karn's expert marksmanship – but still they relentlessly advanced.

One of the True Slaves demonstrated uncharacteristic tactical sense, slipping through the doors and trying to close in upon Karn from the side using a computer bank for cover, but Onan was ready for him.

"In the name of God most holy!" he screamed with his hoary, whiskey voice, bringing the heavy spanner crashing down on top of the True Slave's skull. It gave way with a disgusting crunch, but the True Slave was still semi-functioning and swiped Onan across the neck with long, ragged nails.

The old Ni-Kunni gasped and stumbled backward, allowing Karn to place six center-of-mass shots into the Sansha golem, dropping it like a sack of bricks.

"Smart gun, sixty five rounds remaining."

"Onan! Onan, are you all right?"

Avi abandoned her shelter at the rear of the bridge and ran over to the old man, cradling his bloodied neck tenderly in a cupped hand. "Oh, they're just scratches, pretty deep ones, but you'll be fine! You'll be fine!"

The tears in her eyes told Onan all he needed to know.

Karn found himself faced with no less than ten of the stumbling corpse-drones, each trying to witlessly elbow past the other through the gaping bridge doorway. He raked them with a single quick stream of fire, dropping six or seven. The rest fell to aimed shots.

"Smart gun, seventeen rounds remaining. Ammunition expenditure imminent."

Coughing crimson, Onan rose to his feet. He glanced about the bridge for a more suitable weapon than the blood-slicked spanner in his hand. He did not glance for long before his eyes came to rest on a plain square hatch on the rear wall of the bridge. He squinted, trying to make out the gore-obscured text printed thereon.

"That's it," Onan pointed.

Karn glanced over his shoulder for but a moment, already taking aim at the next wave of True Slaves. "What?"

"The pod."

"I'm not following."

He leaned closer to Karn, almost whispering, ensuring Avi could not hear. "We're dead men, Karn. We have lived good lives but there is no getting out from this. Her on the other hand..." He motioned to the weeping, terrified girl with a subtle nod. Karn returned it, understanding the older man's intention.

Another savage burst of fire decimated the slogging wave of grey, gurgling bodies. As soon as they dropped dead, Karn and Onan seized Avi Tarken by the shoulders, prompting her to yelp in surprise. She fought, but was powerless against the two stronger men as they dragged her over to the capsule ingress hatch.

"Get in!" screamed Karn, turning to pepper the incoming True Slaves with more fire.

"Smart gun, two rounds remaining. Warning! Ammunition expenditure imminent."

"No, I'm not leaving you! Keep firing! Why did you stop firing? You still have two bullets. They're coming, Karn! Keep shooting! Keep shooting!"

Onan placed a hand on her shoulder, his breath rasping and his warm voice laboured. The blood from his neck wound had spread to form a crimson bib upon his shirt. "Little one... the pod has life support for one person. Someone has to get out and tell the universe what happened here. Go on. It is my fault that we are here and our greed has led God to punish us. Let us men of war do one last gallant thing to reclaim our place in paradise."

Avi struggled, almost overpowering the weakened Onan, when Karn gave her a final shove and she fell backward into the egg-shaped pool of sludge.

"Keep shooting! You still have two bullets!" she repeated, pleading for Karn to make some effort to defend himself. The things were only a few paces away now.

Karn slammed the capsule's external control panel, and the egg-shaped lid slowly began to descend over Avi. In moments it would seal her in an impregnable barrier – even these monstrosities would not be able to crack a shell wrought of complex fullerene. Before it closed completely, Avi burst from the pod and tearfully embraced Karn, leaving him slick with sludge.


"Keep firing," she whispered in his ear. "You still have two..."

Karn held her close and whispered back into her ears. "The last two... are for us."

She backed away from him, shock registering on her face. Shattered, she reclined in the capsule and allowed it to close over her like a clamshell. As soon as it was secure and the locking clamps engaged, Karn brought the butt of Tacit Warrior furiously down upon the external control panel, shattering it and rendering it inoperable. If only to buy her a few more seconds.

She heard one shot and screamed. Then she heard the other and wept once more. They would rather have taken their own lives, than become those... things.

Her pod erupted from the damned cruise liner's ejection hatch shortly thereafter, propelled clear away from the streamlined hulk by small explosive charges.

She clutched Karn's necklace in her softly shaking hand. 

E-ON regular Tom Czerniawski is the writer of The Hamish Saga and The Chorus of Angels Saga, as well as four EVE Chronicles. He has appeared in PC Gamer, New Scientist and, from time to time, EVE-Online.



TERRAFO

AS YOU READ THIS, MOST OF CCP IS NECK-DEEP IN DEVELOPING KALI. TUCKED AWAY IS A SMALL TEAM OF EVE'S MOST SENIOR MINDS – PLANNING AHEAD TO POST-KALI EVE, A GAME THAT AIMS TO EXPLORE INNER SPACE AND EVOLVE LIFE ACROSS MANY THOUSANDS OF CURRENTLY LIFELESS PLANETS. THE LANDSCAPE IS CHANGING...

→ The third annual EVE Player Gathering is almost upon us and regular attendees are no doubt eager to see what CCP has in store now that the tradition has been established for the hosts to stun the audience with footage of some new feature currently in development. Last year a couple of big ships making big explosions were broadcast across the screen that hung over CCP's 'big four' – a sight that was impressive enough to invite much whooping and hollering from the spectators. But it was the previous years' showing of ships flying across mountains and valleys that was the most impressive, causing viewers to rise from their seats, make monkey noises and bang their hands together. Maybe it was because it was so unexpected that the awestruck attendees gave a standing ovation, or maybe it was that, whereas EVE seemed to be growing ever-more complex, requiring a lengthening list of skills, here was a feature that would soon be within the reach of all. Rather obviously, two years on, it isn't.

GAS GIANT

Whilst the concept of Planetary Interaction has barely advanced since October 2004, CCP's methods of development have. It has learnt the hard way – after the punishing schedule of 12 months previous – that big changes need to be phased in rather than press-ganging them into service wholesale. Kali is likely to cover at least a six-month release schedule and, given the changes now planned for Planetary Interaction (sure to be dubbed The Genesis Project by eager *Star Trek* fans), we can expect to have to wait a good deal longer for planets to evolve from being little more than backdrops (as they were in 2004) to offering the kind of economic, political and gameplay opportunities currently found in 0.0 space.

"Since 2004, the idea of Planetary Interaction has taken a backseat," admits CCP's Senior Producer, Nathan Richardsson. "We've been playing around with terrain generation and other procedural mechanics, but it's mostly concept work. We would've had to dedicate the whole company to pulling it off, which would've resulted in many areas of EVE not getting any attention. At that time, we had so many things we wanted to improve and add to the space side of EVE that we couldn't really justify diverting the development resources."

Technology is now on CCP's side, with better tools to create content, and procedural mechanics which can help both initial generation of a landscape and help with ↻

RMING EVE





Ⓖ game mechanics. “We’re also seeing simpler solutions to many of the problems we were encountering,” Richardsson continues. “At the same time we’re seeing things which we want to do today which will require even more work. The trick lies in selecting what features will fit a first version of Planetary Interaction and then build it up from there. We’d love it to be a fully-featured empire-resource-management-RTS-exploration kind of mix from the get-go, but it’s going to be tough to find the right combination of features that will complement EVE as a whole.”

BARREN ROCK

Graphically it’s not hard to imagine what this post-Kali EVE will look like (and it should be stressed that the images on these pages are just that – imaginings based on discussions rather than any real indication of in-game graphics). The ships will look amazing, of course, but beyond the current and rather bland collection of baubles that hang within EVE’s star-studded firmament, we can expect swirling gas giants, rolling clouds, planetary rotation and, closer in, planets of dense liquid and others of barren rock. There will be planets rampant with punishing weather systems, others with crushing pressures, all with the visual effects to match.

It’s the habitable planets, however, that will have players struck dumb with the possibilities, and not just because of the scudding clouds, lapping seas and the lush forests that will thread beneath mountain ranges. There will be much more to planets than simply being a new backdrop to fight across; much in the same way that Titans were developed to be more than just ‘big ships’, the challenge for CCP is about designing a role for planets to play and making them fit the EVE template.

“It’s really a question of how much hand-authoring is involved versus how much is generated,” says Richardsson. “Do we start with a mixture of ripe planets, or directly hostile ones which you need to terraform? Are they all empty? What level of habitation should there be? What about empire planets? Are they inhabited and open for gameplay, or partially-habited and the rest open for players to colonize? How much of the inhabited world is hand-authored, or do we do an initial seed which we modify by hand afterwards?”

CCP’s (or rather, Richardsson’s) preference is to stick with the established ethos of having

TERRAFORMING EVE





THERE WILL BE MUCH MORE TO PLANETS THAN SIMPLY BEING A NEW BACKDROP TO FIGHT ACROSS. THE BIG CHALLENGE IS FINDING A ROLE FOR THEM

All the images you see here, while representative of the themes being explored by CCP, are merely artists' impressions of what form PI might take

procedurally-created content in the same way that EVE itself was seeded and generated. With tens of thousands of planets this would make sense, with planetary environments, resources and encounters seeded by some seemingly-insignificant number (like, say, 42) and the resultant world-creation channelled by factors like security status and the like. It's hoped that by exploration, discovery and colonization the players will create the content – literally shaping the evolution of each world in the galaxy.

"How far we go with regard to pre-created content will determine the answer to a lot of the technical questions, as well as the manpower required," confesses Richardsson.

TERRESTRIAL EXTRAS

As to the specifics of how PI will manifest itself in the gameplay of EVE, Richardsson is quick to point out that nothing is set in stone as yet, but adds that a principle of design is that current or near-future EVE gameplay should not have to change to accommodate it. Rather, the goal would be to create PI so that it complements the current structures.

"Planetary Interaction should add more objectives for players," he says. "It should expand the industrial and research infrastructure, add more economic goals for the player in space where the actions on the planet dictates supply and demand, of, for example, population."

The reason for developing the idea of planets clearly is about expanding EVE's already highly-evolved layers of resource management. A fully industrialized planet should allow you access to all kind of raw materials, from Earth-like minerals to those found in asteroid and ice fields. But they will also offer resources such as water, wood and even domestic farm animals and crops.

The most significant resource mooted is people, or rather, a population. It's the level of the population – which will rise and fall in line with infrastructure, lines of communications, security, government, geography and other factors – that will drive NPC trade far more than it does today. There's even talk of having population careers; a workforce of lumberjacks, farmers, miners, slaves and builders. One might reliably assume that a planetary population would require station populations as a pre-requisite, which might in turn necessitate ship crews being implemented into the game first. Maybe.

EXTRASOLAR ACTIVITY

But we're getting ahead of ourselves. CCP hasn't even decided how pilots will be able to access these planets, let alone what exactly they'll be doing once they find themselves flying across them. Will there be the traditional warp-in points where a pilot can go from stargate to atmosphere in the same way they can warp to a station? Or will they have to dock with some kind of orbital platform and climb into an aircraft?

"That really depends on what level of planetary interaction we've got at that time," responds Richardsson. "Assuming we scale the release over an extended period – which is pretty much a given – we would likely begin with using Frigates as the primary orbital-capable ship and, further down the line, perhaps introduce aircraft. With regard to warp-in points, that's something we're discussing internally at the moment and will likely depend on how we generate terrain and will also depend on how we handle bookmarks v2.0. Also, a lot of the features for Planetary Interaction will flow directly from those in Kali and seeing as they're still being designed, we can't tie ourselves down with too many specifics."

What is *likely* is that planetary development – or at least the purpose for it – will broadly follow on from current precepts of sovereignty. Outposts currently dictate the sovereignty of a system and it's likely that an outpost will be required before a planet can be claimed. That's not to say someone won't be able to set themselves up on a planet without an outpost, but to affect the epochal shift in planetary development, from barren rock to habitable world (which may or may not require some sort of terraforming mechanic), or from habitable world to industrialised hub, an outpost will be necessary – if only as a staging post for the necessary imports to build a colony.

SURFACE TENSION

The current thinking is to have planets divided into territories, each one potentially resource-rich, pirate-infested, archaeological, highly populated, or a manufacturing centre – or even all of the above depending on how they are (or aren't) developed. Sovereignty can then lead to having capital territories, which would perhaps elicit some kind of military, political or commercial bonus for those in control.

With planets being a rich source of raw materials, and very probably home to a few undiscovered rarities, can we assume planets will form part of the infrastructure that will herald the introduction of EVE's next tech level? Richardsson will only reveal the following: "Initial thoughts are that planets ☺



CURRENT THINKING IS TO HAVE PLANETS DIVIDED INTO TERRITORIES, EACH ONE POTENTIALLY RESOURCE-RICH PIRATE-INFESTED, OR A MANUFACTURING CENTRE

Ⓔ will be locations for some resource gathering and locations where you can create a full manufacturing chain, including all the various reactions. Presently, you have various starbase structures doing individual parts of the manufacturing process, then people ship to another location to continue the process. A planet would allow you to do almost the full process in a single setup – so long as the manufacturing infrastructure is in place.”

All very advanced stuff, perhaps destined for a far-future stage in EVE’s development – such as the previously mentioned ‘empire-resource-management-RTS-exploration mix’, when the current player alliances will have evolved into small empires (which was discussed at Fanfest 2005). Regardless, the potential is palpable, even if the reality currently isn’t.

FINAL THOUGHTS

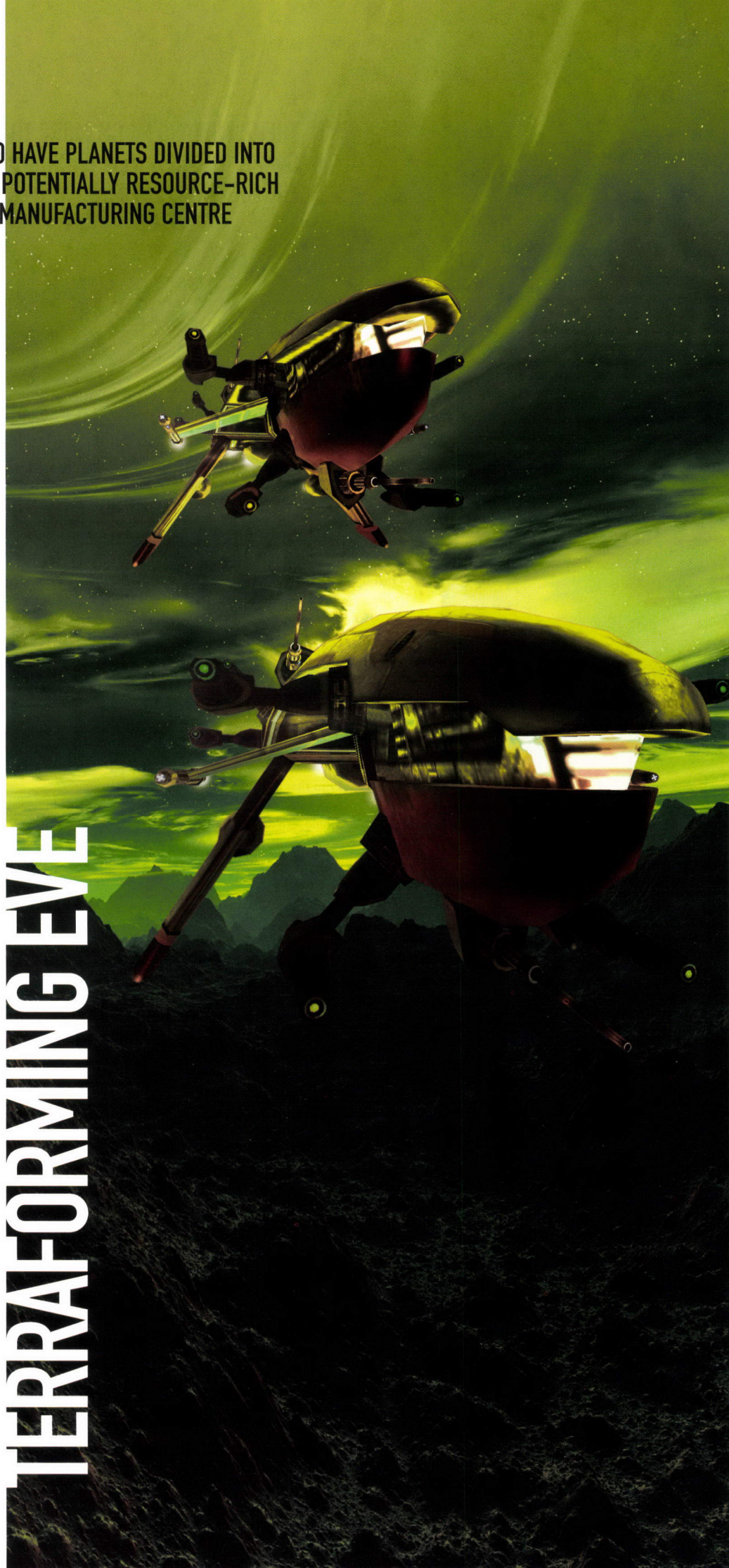
Richardsson refuses to be tied down to a release date for ‘Planetary Interaction: Stage One’. Late 2007 would be the earliest such a thing could appear and given CCP’s track record, mid-2008 would be more likely, with completion and aspects like terraforming, planetary bombardment and territorial land control at least a year beyond that.

“We need to move from the ‘proof of concept’ stage to a ‘prototype’ stage, where we’re focusing on the basic game mechanics, our initial toolset, generation tools and so on,” he explains. “This will take considerable time but in the beginning a small task force will be enough. Then we’ll be scaling up the project and getting into a production phase. But taking these phases together, we’re talking about years ‘till we see this being deployed. There might be simpler Planetary Interaction deployed in the meantime, ‘seeding’ a world for example, where you are essentially managing the planet from the orbiting station but that remains to be seen after the masterplan has been finalized.”

That’s assuming CCP doesn’t get sidetracked with some other gameplay feature (walking around stations being one that seems to be in vogue). However long it takes, PI is back on the agenda and more than any other feature to date, its development is going to expand EVE far beyond what CCP envisaged when it set out to create the game nearly 10 years ago.

Whether or not some early strain of PI DNA will be shown at Fanfest is unknown. CCP is cagey about revealing what’s in store and is probably just as likely to show off some first-person shooter it has been developing secretly (it hasn’t, by the way). Whatever we see, the eventual release of Planetary Interaction just adds to the growing list of reasons why it’s wise to stick around in the EVE universe. Ⓔ

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➡ The impact of an object from space onto a planetary body can be a terrible thing. Small objects are simply ground and burnt into dust by the friction of entry into an atmosphere, as gravity relentlessly pulls the object forward. Objects of a sufficient mass, however, become the opposite. Gravity and friction turn an ordinary chunk of metal or rock into a burning missile capable of causing as much damage as an atomic device. When one such object falls from the sky and strikes the earth, it is considered a catastrophe. When more than one fall from the sky, many consider it to be the End of the World, the Wrath of God, Ragnarok, Armageddon, and a hundred other names for the final destruction of man; rightly so, for enough impacts can put sufficient dust into the air to blot out the skies and choke the light and life out of all living things on a planet.

When such objects turn out to be linear accelerator shells or nuclear weaponry fired by men at other men, which explode after tearing ragged gashes into the earth, or detonate before they impact, bathing parts of a world in the fire of the atom and the burning effluence of hard radiation, then it is simply called War.

It was War that Admiral Revenald Dorneaux, and the hundred-odd starship captains who served beneath him, had unleashed upon Caldari Prime. Dorneaux's finger hovered over the button he had just pressed. The Admiral was, however, unaware of this finger, or this button. The whole of his attention and thought had been diverted from his senses of touch, of taste, of hearing, toward his sense of sight. The image, the reality that made contact with his eyes through the massive transparisteel view-window of his vessel's bridge demanded such rapture. He was watching the murder of a world by fire. He was watching War.

In the cold logic of War, what his vessel was doing made sense. The Caldari had kept hidden the gates and locations of dozens of colony worlds from the Federal Government, and was keeping the resources and revenue of these worlds for themselves. When the Federal Government had demanded proper tax and administration of these worlds, as was laid out in the Federal Constitution, the provincial government of the Caldari rebuked them completely, going so far as to say they had little intention of rendering their dues and duties to the Government and that they would no longer be a member state of the Gallente Federation. Not only that, but radicals who had almost certainly possessed the backing of the Caldari government had destroyed the underwater city of Nouvelle Rouvenor, the primary Gallentean

settlement upon Caldari Prime. Hundreds of thousands of lives were snuffed out in a matter of minutes by the icy waters of the Caldari homeworld. The Federal Government had to respond.

And this was the response the Government had ordered, the response that Admiral Revenald Dorneaux's vessel was delivering to Caldari Prime before his very eyes.

+++

At first, when the order had come over the radio, Dorneaux could barely believe his ears. Surely the Military Command had not authorised... But the order seemed clear enough. Wanting to verify the validity of the orders (as was his prerogative under the Rules of Engagement concerning an order such as the one he had received), he had radioed back a confirmation request to Military Command. He had waited several agonising hours as the radio signal travelled as fast as it could through the reaches of space, and again for the reply to come back to him. The reply he received was straightforward:

"HEAVY WEAPONS RELEASE ORDER CONFIRMED. PROCEED WITH IMMEDIATE ENGAGEMENT OF TARGETS."

It was so easy to unleash, really. A finger pressed against a scanner, a code word spoken to verify voice and password knowledge; and the insertion of a key, which he kept around his neck at all times. Once this had been done, there was only the single button to press. It was here that he hesitated for just a moment, as any man would before taking the final

THE DRAGON

NEW FICTION BY ANDREW DICE

➤ With the press of a single button, the eight bombardment vessels opened fire, bringing a 'response' to Caldari Prime

step into the abyss of War. He considered what pressing that button would do, what pressing that button would unleash. At that moment, he pulled a small, unchained locket from the pocket of his trousers, and stared at the picture inside for a moment as his aides and the bridge staff waited for him to carry out his duty. He seemed, at that moment, to still have faith in the military in which he served and the Federation he had devoted his life to protecting. And so he pressed the small, red button upon an unassuming console on the bridge of the Dracofeu-class Orbital Bombardment Vessel upon which he was stationed.

This button served a dual purpose. It activated the heavy kinetic accelerators and nuclear missile launchers upon his own vessel against the pre-selected surface targets, and sent a weapons-free signal to all the other orbiting Dracofeaus, ordering them to open fire on their own targets and giving the activation signal for their own weapons. Admiral Dorneaux, however, had not been told the other Dracofeaus had been given targets for all their weapons. He logically assumed that only his vessel would be bringing all guns to bear.

Thus, with the press of a single button, the eight bombardment vessels orbiting Caldari Prime opened fire with their weapons, weapons that were designed specifically to devastate ground targets and bring a 'response' to the Caldari.

The Federal Government itself would broadcast a message to the Caldari, of course: stand down from your defiant stance and resubmit yourself to the Federal Government, honour the Constitution you signed, and the bombardment will cease. In the actual communiqué would be an unspoken message, however: if you don't say yes, we'll burn you from the face of the universe.

The Caldari had made no response yet.

And so Dorneaux stood transfixed in horrified awe, as a

man might watch a train wreck from a distance. Except, of course, he could not escape the sobering fact that he was the very one who had placed the destruction-wreaking penny upon this particular set of train tracks. He watched as the two meter-wide linear accelerator shells tore through Caldari Prime's atmosphere, riding the momentum from their launch to achieve terminal velocity almost instantly. He watched as missiles, as large as a civilian jet-liner, fell to the earth with a more controlled descent, homing in on their target as sure as an arrow from a bow. He

watched them land. From here, the little fireballs and puffs of cloud all looked the same, save for when a nuclear device activated in the atmosphere, burning a part of the world with the fury of a sun for an instant. But he knew it was different, down there. He could see, clear as Luminaire, the accelerator shells ripping into buildings as they fell; the power of the atmospheric wake of the shells, tearing ears apart and flaying the skin off those unfortunate to be too close to the burning projectiles; the impact, the cloud of debris and shrapnel that would ultimately finish off anyone who survived the fall of the awful meteor to unscarred soil.

And that would be for the falling stars that didn't explode. Some would hit the ground and the force of the impact would cause detonation, creating a small earthquake and imploding the ground beneath people's feet – while making it burn at the same time. Others would simply explode above their target. Those caught in such blasts would be the lucky ones, really. They would only feel the heat for a second, see the briefest flashes of light... and then there would be nothing.

+++

Revenald Dorneaux watched it continue. And to the very core of his being, he knew. They had not given the targeting order to his vessel, but he knew.

Slowly, after what felt like the passing of an age, the Admiral began to hear and feel again. He realised he was gripping the top of the console so tightly that he was in danger of making his hands bleed. Releasing the console, the whispered chatter of his bridge staff began to reach his ears again...

"Accuracy deviation is less than five per cent."

"Dracofeu Four is reporting a malfunction with her missile batteries."

"Escort fleet reports no resistance."

"Communication channels still silent." ☾

⊕ Some of them were trying to choke back horror, as their Admiral was. Some of them were passive, as though they were unaffected by the events below them – or were attempting to ignore them. Perhaps a few were even Ultra-Nationalists. Revenald Dorneaux did not particularly care at that moment. Conscious of the world around him, he still could not take his eyes off what he saw unfolding below.

"Admiral?"

Revenald Dorneaux didn't acknowledge the Lieutenant addressing him.

"Admiral, we've received a message from the 3rd Spaceborne Division. They're ready to make planetfall once the Caldari planetary command and control centre is shut down. Warheads should be striking any second now."

The Caldari C&C? Why did that...

"Show me."

"Sir?"

"SHOW ME!" he yelled so loud that it turned his throat raw.

"Erm... yes sir," the Lieutenant replied, gesturing to a nearby control officer. Within seconds, a projection appeared in front of the view-window, showing a zoomed in portion of Caldari Prime's surface. Mountains. Mountains clad in snow so white that their like could not be found anywhere else in the known galaxy. Mountains seemingly chiselled by the hands of the Gods. Now the Admiral remembered, the Caldari supposedly hid their primary C&C in those mountains due to the natural protection afforded by the rock... and of course, they counted on the fact that no one would destroy something so beautiful, something so central to the Caldari's native culture...

The flashes occurred and the clouds appeared. Nuclear warhead after nuclear warhead slammed into the peaks, the flash of atomic fire vaporizing glaciers at an eyeblink. The clouds from the explosions were twisted and deformed; the constant temperature changes and massive amounts of airborne debris were stirring the wind into a frenzy. In the space of a few minutes, the entirety of the Kaalakiota Peaks had been burnt to a crisp and partially levelled by nuclear power. Barely a trace of snow could be seen through the pervasive cloud layer.

The Lieutenant turned to Revenald Dorneaux again. "Shall the 3rd Spaceborne move in, sir?"

He stood there for a moment, seemingly dumb. Anyone watching him would say that, in those moments, he did not even breathe. Then, with an oddly passive expression on his face, Admiral Revenald Dorneaux turned to leave the bridge.

"Sir? Sir, what are your orders?" the Lieutenant shouted after him as he moved. He did not acknowledge the junior officer and left the bridge of the Dracofeu.

He walked the halls of his vessel, neither striding nor staggering, but moving as a man in a dream would. He occasionally bumped into crew members that were going about the business of War, failing to acknowledge their protests when they fell to the floor. He did not even see them, really; his attention was focused on his mind's eye, which showed him the continuing destruction of the world below him, in rhythm to the sound of the guns reverberating through the ship. He could see buildings crushed and flattened by accelerator-shells travelling faster than the speed of sound. He could see entire cities wiped out by the birth and death of miniature suns, their citizens barely even aware of the fact that they had been killed before they were turned to cinders.

He knew that not every city would receive such a fate, only the ones with supposed 'military significance'. It did not matter. The answer to what his ship was doing was still the same.

All the while, he would occasionally glance down at the locket still in his hand, and for a moment the mask of passivity would break and a tear would escape his eyes. Then he would look forward and his face would again become blank.

Eventually, he reached his goal. It was a hatchway with a door, similar to other

hatchways on the vessel. This one, however, was trimmed with yellow and black stripes all along the edge. Pausing for a moment before the closed portal, as though in contemplation of it, he pressed a large red button along its side. With a buzz that resounded throughout the hallway, the hatch swung open. As the Admiral stepped into the opening, a young petty officer stepped forward as though to stop him, saying, "Sir, what are you doing, that's not..."

With a single fluid movement, Dorneaux swung around and hit the officer so hard that the young man went flying into the far wall. Barely even breaking stride, Dorneaux finished stepping through the hatchway, closing it behind him. He pressed another button on the other side of the hatchway, sealing the door. Others had come running at the sound of the commotion; some were seeing to the semi-conscious petty officer, while others were banging on the porthole of the hatchway and shouting at Revenald Dorneaux. He could still hear what some of them were saying.

"Sir, what are you doing? You're not wearing a pressure suit! SIR!"

Paying them no heed, Revenald Dorneaux entered a code on a keypad and calmly pressed one more key. Klaxons sounded in the hatchway and throughout the corridor. The crew on the other side of the hatchway were screaming at Revenald Dorneaux now, some trying to pry open the sealed door with their bare hands. Their words still reached him.

"SIR! DON'T DO THIS! ENTER YOUR OVERRIDE CODE AGAIN! YOU DON'T NEED TO DO THIS!"

At those words, Revenald Dorneaux pressed a final button on the wall in front of him, one near a speaker. Slowly, he said, "This must be done."

He then turned back toward the hatch at last, and the officers and crew crowded around the porthole could see the expression on their Admiral's face. It was the perfect face of regret, the perfect face of tragedy. It was the face of a man who knew he was damned.

"This is the only thing I can do, after what I have done," he continued. "Remember, my children. After today we are Gallente no more. We were once, when Doule and the Sword made us so. After today... no longer."

And with that, the space doors of the airlock opened, and Admiral Revenald Dorneaux was flung into space.


As his blood froze, his eardrums ruptured and his skin split, Revenald Dorneaux beheld Caldari Prime one last time, as the great clouds from the bombardment spread, and the troop transports began their descent behind another volley of projectiles. Even as the flesh of his brain turned to ice, he was still possessed of one thought.

It is all I can do for you, old friend. Forgive me, Yakiya. Forgive them.

The body of Revenald Dorneaux was not massive enough to survive re-entry.

Upon his vessel, the stricken petty officer noticed something on the ground as his crew mates watched their commander throw himself to the void. Picking it up, he saw it was a locket. He opened it and looked at the picture inside.

It was a picture of six people. Two men. One was Admiral Dorneaux, and the petty officer thought the other looked like traitor Admiral Yakiya Tovil-Toba. Then two women and two children who looked as if they were young teenagers – a boy standing near Dorneaux, a girl near Tovil-Toba.

The background was clear blue sky and some of the whitest snow the petty officer had ever seen. 

A fan of EVE since before it went into testing, Andrew Dice has also written for EVE's website. He is currently pursuing an English degree at George Mason University.

DO YOU KNOW
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MUSIC WORK..?

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RAEM CIVRIE



PLAYER PROFILE

NAME:	Raem Civrie
CORPORATION:	Umbra Congregatio [UMCON]
POSITION:	Chief Security Officer
ALLIANCE:	Interstellar Alcohol Conglomerate [IAC]
SPECIALITY:	Making friends and influencing people
SECURITY RATING:	2.8
MOST LIKELY TO SAY:	"Trust me."
LEAST LIKELY TO SAY:	"Which is the best Frig for mining?"

Public employment records are always a good place to start when looking into someone's background and Raem Civrie's past is as interesting as any you'll find. Endless, Evolution and Jericho Fraction are just three of his previous employers and, whilst he seems proud to have worked for some high-profile corporations, he's quick to state that a résumé is no measure of character or political leaning. He slights Jericho's anti-territorial stance, admits he is no fan of BoB (among which Evolution is the largest corp) and deflects any probing of his occasional appearance on the roster of infamous contract embezzlers, the Guiding Hand Social Club.

As to his own part in the deconstruction of Ubiqua Seraph – EVE's most high-profile case of corp infiltration to date – Civrie is guarded. He is open about his regard for GH-SC, its leader, and what both have accomplished (with or without his assistance). By his associations, however, one might reliably assume he's at best not to be trusted, and at worst, malevolent.

"I'd say I can be trusted about as much as the next person," he says, "but I'm much more realistic about any ties I make and maintain than the average person. Business trust is based on convenience and reputation, if I decide to break that trust it's because I know it will not reflect negatively on me, or that the benefits will outweigh the breach of trust. This, of course, is not uncommon amongst the denizens of EVE. I do not betray friends, unless they do something serious enough



Is Civrie as unskilled a fighter as he proclaims?



Civrie's no pirate, but you're advised to steer clear of the crossfire if you see him in action

to cause me to reconsider their friendship. It's more of a self-preservation instinct than ingrained morality. Everyone can benefit from a loyal network of individuals behind their back, and it rarely pays to stir up your own den."

As for being dastardly or evil, Civrie doesn't see himself that way. "I'll press any advantage I can, and my regard for random people caught in the crossfire may be minimal, but any transgressions on random travellers I make are out of convenience, if not need, rather than malice."

HOW TO MAKE FRIENDS

Civrie displays the character of the archetypal – some might say stereotypical – Caldari. He appears proud and business-like, choosing his words carefully, yet he barely hides his disdain for those he considers weak. He's not the model citizen, however. He pursues individual freedom rather than falling under state control, yet he's obstinate in his belief that his actions have always been within the law. That he chooses to operate in lawless space is just a matter of geography.

"I am not as loyal to the State as I am to the people and culture – preservation of our heritage and history means more to me than the preservation of any government body that controls it. To this end I've been

Money can open many doors for you, but so can fame. Influence means more to me than either money or fame individually and it can be gained by way of both or neither

working to document and preserve the Napanii language in conjunction with Herko Khergans, who has been quite diligent at recording and retelling the various tales of Caldari lore."

Despite his regard for culture, it's clear where Civrie's true loyalties lie – himself. Fame and wealth appear not to be the prime motivation for his deeds, though. "Money can open many doors for you, but so can fame," he says. "During my time in the Guiding Hand, I learned a lot about social and political engineering and the benefits thereof, but I've also learned that ISK is often the primary factor in any endeavor and relationship. At the same time, owning vast amounts of cash can amount to nothing if you aren't known to the world at large, or at least have contacts in useful places. Influence means more to me than money or fame individually, and it can be gained by way of both or neither."

THE GAME IS A FOOT

Tellingly, Civrie hides his accomplishments. Asked what his career highpoint might be, he says: "I'm not quite at liberty to say. Not yet at least." A new heist perhaps? Or a new leaf turned over? His present, at least what he chooses to reveal of it, appears more mundane. "Most of my time is spent tending to either security matters in my current corporation, Umbra Congregatio, or on small-scale politics and social engineering," he documents. "I have a certain aptitude for combat, but it's an indulgence I rarely give in to, as there are people far more dedicated to wholesale destruction than I am. You could say that I am a hobbyist hunter amongst soldiers."

Such modesty serves Civrie well. For most, combat experience is what defines a starship commander. That he rates his own skills as amateur, serves to keep him in the shadows. It's when he chooses to step out from them that it's a cause for concern.

STEALTH BOMBERS



TEXT: DIGITALCOMMUNIST

DigitalCommunist has decided to hang up his piloting goggles for now and fly off into the EVE Gate. And he still never got inside a Tier 3 Battleship.

ARTWORK BY JOHN AUGAR

STEALTH BOMBERS ARE ONE OF THE LEAST POPULAR SHIP TYPES IN EVE, THEIR BAD PRESS HAVING ENTERED THE REALM OF MYTH AND SUPERSTITION. PERHAPS BY OUTLINING THEIR EXACT LIMITATIONS AND CAPABILITIES YOU'LL BE ABLE TO BETTER DETERMINE WHETHER THEY'RE WORTHY OF ATTENTION

➡ Last year, in what seems to be a sudden attack of nostalgia, CCP reintroduced cruise missiles on Frigates under the guise of Stealth Bombers. Naturally, players remembered the 'good ole days' of do-or-die combat, and held high expectations of them right from the very start.

There could be several explanations for why it was chosen to include stealth in the form of cloaking. Perhaps it was down to the complete lack of combat-capable cloak ships at the time. The entire system had been castrated to a point where it was impractical for duties outside of reconnaissance. This led to a general dissatisfaction with the feature, even though paranoia and fears concerning its abuse were well justified.

In my experience, the cloak mechanism adds very little in the way of actual stealth and quite a lot to the price of your ship. Being targeted by another player during combat renders the module obsolete, which can happen often when fighting your target class – the Frigate. Larger ships will struggle primarily due to signature radius and its effect on everything from lock speed to tracking. Being unable to warp while cloaked requires advance knowledge of where an enemy will go and being ready for them.

This could work well for ambushing complex runners, if all the complexes in low security space and 0.0 space were not designed

for Battleships. Being able to move faster while cloaked requires you to pay special attention to your movement. Moving at full velocity, decloaking, then attempting to make a turn will take an extremely long time. It's the same effect you see when your microwarpdrive shuts off. The benefit of this means you become invulnerable to tackle at jump-in points. Simply move towards your escape object, and cloak right away. Not unique to Bombers; Interceptors, Covert Ops, and Recons are all difficult to catch.

The only other notable advantage cloaking gives is the ability to cycle your cloaking to break lock attempts. For example: decloak 80km away from a Battleship, lock and fire a salvo of cruise missiles, then cloak right away. Just before they reach the target, decloak in order to ensure they deal damage and fire another salvo if you can. This is great harassment, provided your enemy can't lock back fast enough. If you do manage to get locked, your only options are ECM defenses or a quick retreat (proper alignment is key to this). Taking fire is simply not an option. ☹







PURIFIER

➡ Even after this long since their introduction, witnessing a stealth bomber in action can leave many puzzled looks. To spot a Purifier in PvP adds a whole new layer of ambiguity, for it's the least popular choice. It achieves this by catering to very specific situations only encountered by a very specific individual. When your whole class is struggling to find its niche in combat, this can be very counterintuitive.

Three main limitations exist which create this problem for the Purifier. The most obvious one would be the preference of EM damage over any others. The only situation where EM would perform best would be versus unresisted shields on a Tech I ship, and only marginally to the Manticore's three launchers. Being able to strip the shields off an armour-tanking vessel slightly faster means little, and in larger group combat the shields will be gone before your missiles ever manage to hit their targets.

HIGH SLOTS

2 x Cruise Missile Launcher II
1 x Improved Cloaking Device II

MED SLOTS

1 x J5b Phased Prototype Warp Inhibitor I
1 x Fleeting Propulsion Inhibitor I
1 x F-90 Positional Sensor Subroutines

LOW SLOTS

1 x Small Armour Repairer II
1 x Internal Force Field Array I
1 x Capacitor Power Relay I

The second problem is the expectation that Amarr ships will have a superior defense when their offense isn't up to par. It may be true statistically across all four Bombers, but it ends up being completely negligible in real combat. Hit points, capacitor and resists are too low for a Bomber to start relying on tanking as part of any serious tactic. To lose your ship in one volley should be considered the norm.

The third problem with the Purifier defines the situation best, and I'll use the role-play community to better explain it. Imagine you are part of the CVA, fighting the usual Minmatar terrorists. The inability to do significant amounts of kinetic or explosive damage in your Amarr-only fleet makes it highly predictable. Destroying Minmatar ships with assault resists for EM and thermal can also prove difficult. In this situation having a few Purifiers loaded with explosive missiles can be good. The problem is that many Amarr specialists don't have the necessary missile skills to try this; they would sooner train drones and use Berserkers on the Arbitrator or Armageddon.

The Purifier can add extra versatility to extremely unique circumstances, but it does so with an unreasonable cost in skill points.





MINMATAR

HOUND

HIGH SLOTS

- 2 x 280mm Howitzer Artillery II
- 2 x Cruise Missile Launcher II
- 1 x Improved Cloaking Device II

MED SLOTS

- 1 x J5b Phased Prototype Warp Inhibitor I
- 1 x Fleeting Propulsion Inhibitor I
- 1 x F-90 Positional Sensor Subroutines

LOW SLOTS

- 2 x Micro Auxiliary Power Core I
- 1 x Local Hull Conversion Nanofiber Structure I

Public beliefs would state the Hound is the second best Stealth Bomber, after the Manticore. It remains true to a certain extent, but can vary from person to person. Looking at the title of this class alone, you can deduce that being a sneaky ganker is the name of the game. The racial trait of lower signature radius and higher ship velocity is most relevant on Frigates. One could argue it adds more in the way of actual stealth and defense than any other stat or gimmick, including the cloak module itself. This would place the Hound at number one.


One could also argue the ability to obtain the highest alpha strike from its two turrets can be more important to success than having better damage over time. However, unlike the Purifier, the Hound doesn't provide its race with any unique or divergent gameplay. The race is already

capable of mixing damage types, and using missiles well enough to avoid having the same problems Amarr would. It may be adept at speed and stealth, but the same can be said of every other Minmatar ship up to and including Capitals. The ability to alpha strike its victims is not a new concept either – it's the primary advantage of artillery weapons. For a devout Minmatar specialist, the Hound is gravy. Its usage would then depend on the entire class being able to perform well – which is currently not the case.

There are many alternatives in the Minmatar ship catalogue if you're looking to pop Frigates. Thus, the ship may be better than a Purifier in a 1v1 comparison, but adds far less value to the race as a whole. It tends to follow convention. If you were attempting to sneak around and ambush, the last thing you want is your

enemy to be wary of such ploys. On the up side, we don't typically restrict ourselves to fighting the same people with the same ships for extended periods of time. So once again this tactic may only be relevant to the role-players, a group of people with bigger problems than any one ship can fix.

Some will have Minmatar Frigate skill trained to level 5 for Covert Ops, and everything above belonging to another race. For them, flying a giant space brick which takes years to align is convention, so the Hound gives a nice change of pace.

Enter the Frigate jockey factor – pilots that can maximize the advantages of speed and signature radius. Advantages which become negated if you are ignorant enough to sit still, reduce transverse, or snipe with the Hound. So once again, context becomes the true measure of the ship's value. 



CALDARI

MANTICORE



HIGH SLOTS

3 x Cruise Missile Launcher II
1 x Improved Cloaking Device II

MED SLOTS

1 x Faint Epsilon Warp Prohibitor I
1 x X5 Prototype I Engine Enervator
1 x 'Hypnos' Multispectral ECM I
1 x F-90 Positional Sensor Subroutines

LOW SLOTS

2 x Local Power Plant Manager: Capacity Power Relay I

➡ If you're a cynic like me, the obvious first response to an article about Stealth Bombers would go something along the lines of 'everyone knows the Manticore is best; what a waste of time – I hate your face DigitalCommunist!' So let's suspend our disbelief for a brief moment and accept the following truth: Manticore is *not* the best bomber just because it has three launcher slots. Repeat as often as necessary until you begin believing it.

The Manticore is, however, the most *effective* bomber. The reasons are many, but most of them simplify down to a matter of fittings. For a ship with three launchers, I was expecting massive difficulties in making it work, but it turns out the launcher

fitting bonus listed in the description is not wholly accurate. Each launcher consumes less powergrid than it would normally, leaving you with just enough to fill the remainder of your slots. This is not the case with other Bombers, where you must use Micro Auxiliary Power Cores (MAPCs) to accommodate for the two turrets.

This brings me to the next issue – slot layout. Medium slots are better than low slots, in general, which puts the Manticore and Nemesis at a great advantage over the Hound and Purifier. Having just one ECM module onboard will multiply your chances of survival in ways no armour repairer could. Devoting your low slots to grid enhancing modules just to add guns can widen the

gap further by removing the option of capacitor power relays and nanofibers.

Finally, the third issue – guns versus launchers. Theoretically the turret ships should be capable of higher damage over time, but the downside comes not only in terms of fittings, but range as well. Why risk getting close at all when you can lob cruise missiles from 150km away? It may not be interesting, or even effective, but it's the best you can do in a serious situation (i.e. facing something that can fire back).

The Manticore's biggest weakness is stealth and agility. It moves like a cruiser – a Caldari cruiser. While extremely annoying, it will not impede your ship in combat as long as you stay properly aligned.



GALLENTE

NEMESIS

➔ If the Tristan is affectionately referred to as the 'Fat Man', I suspect it won't be long before the Nemesis earns its own nickname. The 'Obese Slob' seems ironic enough to work. Irony because this supposed evolution of the Tristan's design would probably get smacked around and beaten by the Tristan itself. The key fault lies with the amount of powergrid you are left with for fittings after the launchers are online. The Purifier is in first place with 14 megawatts, Hound is second with eight megawatts, Manticore is third with six. And the Nemesis? It has two. That's two measly megawatts for a total of nine empty slots, meaning it needs MAPC as a part of every single fitting.

To be fair, the Nemesis would work if it did not have this problem as thermal is the best normalized damage type. This means you would get through a ship with Tech I resists (like an Interceptor) fastest with Cataclysm cruise missiles. But, then again, common sense also states that people tend to put on armour plates over shield extenders, creating a heavy bias towards kinetic or even explosive damage instead.

I feel having the fourth medium slot rigged for electronic warfare is not only your greatest advantage, but also the lynchpin of any setup. Without it you might as well go fly a Taranis. The tactics are very similar – your goal is to get very close and destroy the target with blasters. In this

case, it's a combination of blasters and cruise missiles and the approach is a lot safer. Because the approach is also a lot slower, this tactic only works if the Frigate doesn't move, or the target is a Cruiser. Using the Nemesis with blasters or Hound with autocannons is a great way to sneak up on long-range cruisers or barges under the protection of Battleships.

I should also mention that Gallente are in the same position as the Amarr when it comes to cruise missiles. They each have one ship capable of using them, making the skill point cost just as prohibitive. The major difference is that Gallente ships have a relatively equal amount of difficulty with shields as they do with armour. Being able to deal explosive damage does not yield as much 'value' to the average Gallente pilot, especially when most of their ships have drones to add some versatility. Having the second highest signature radius does not sweeten the deal.

The Nemesis makes me question why the only true missile class was handled by Duvolle Laboratories instead of Roden Shipyards. Reading the 'higher power output than normal' part of the description should make anyone cringe. ☹



HIGH SLOTS

- 2 x Light Electron Blaster II
- 2 x Cruise Missile Launcher II
- 1 x Improved Cloaking Device II

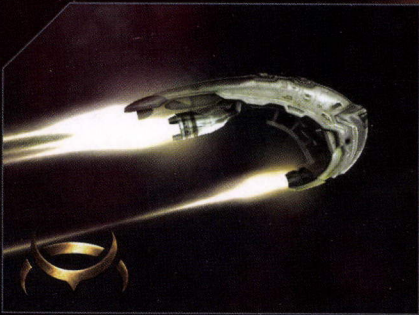
MED SLOTS

- 1 x Faint Epsilon Warp Prohibitor I
- 1 x Fleeting Propulsion Inhibitor I
- 1 x 'Hypnos' Multispectral ECM I
- 1 x F-90 Positional Sensor Subroutines

LOW SLOTS

- 1 x Micro Auxiliary Power Core I
- 1 x Capacitor Power Relay I

STEALTH BOMBERS AT A GLANCE



PURIFIER
Hull: Inquisitor
Developer: Viziam
Number in service: 2177
Average price – all regions: 4,536,550



HOUD
Hull: Breacher
Developer: Boundless Creation
Number in service: 2609
Average price – all regions: 6,821,496

	MODULE / EQUIPMENT BAYS				BASE POWER VALUES				DAMAGE RESISTANCE SHIELD / ARMOUR				SKILL BONUS			TARGETING		
	HIGH SLOTS (TURRET / MISSILE)	MED SLOTS	LOW SLOTS	DRONE BAY (m²)	POWER GRID	CPU	CAPACITOR	BASE SHIELD / ARMOUR	EM resist %	EXPLOSIVE resist %	KINETIC resist %	THERMAL resist %	FRIGATE (RACE SPECIFIC) per level	COVERT OPS per level	BASE TARGETING RANGE	SCAN RES	SENSOR STRENGTH	SIG RADIUS
PURIFIER	5 (2/2)	3	3	0	45	215	250	188 / 344	0 / 60	70 / 40	47.5 / 34.5	20 / 35	Cruise Launcher Powergrid (-19.65%) Small Energy Cap Use (-10%)	Cruise EM Damage (+5%) Cloaked Velocity (+25%)	60km	450mm	Radar 17	45m
HOUD	5 (2/2)	3	3	0	40	220	200	219 / 300	25 / 77.5	60 / 10	40 / 25	30 / 43	Cruise Launcher Powergrid (-19.65%) Small Projectile Damage (+3%)	Cruise Explosive Damage (+5%) Cloaked Velocity (+25%)	55km	500mm	Ladar 17	42m
MANTICORE	5 (1/3)	4	2	0	30	245	215	281 / 256	0 / 60	60 / 10	47.5 / 34.5	40 / 59	Cruise Launcher Powergrid (-19.65%) Cruise Kinetic Damage (+5%)	Cruise Launcher Powergrid (-5%) Cloaked Velocity (+25%)	70km	375mm	Grav. 20	51m
NEMESIS	5 (2/2)	4	2	0	35	230	235	244 / 281	0 / 60	60 / 10	55 / 51	30 / 43	Cruise Launcher Powergrid (-19.65%) Small Hybrid Turret Damage (+5%)	Cruise Thermal Damage (+5%) Cloaked Velocity (+25%)	65km	425mm	Mag. 18	48m

CONCLUSION

➡ In their current state, the number one issue I have with Stealth Bombers is fitting any turrets to them. The power output seems fine; it's the consumption of Cruise Launchers that ruins any hopes of creating a decent setup. This problem leads to the clear superiority of the Manticore, which was arguably the superior of the four bombers to begin with.

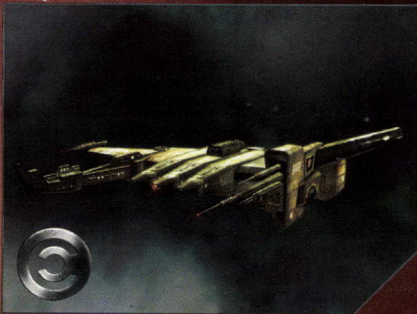
As for the concept of Stealth Bombers in the first place, I am not entirely convinced they share any common traits with the old cruise missile Riflers beyond... well, cruise missiles. There are certainly better alternatives out there for mobility, strength, damage, and even stealth.

This specific combination would be far more appealing if the role in the game were unique. Why does EVE need a dedicated anti-Frigate vessel when Frigates themselves are the best counter? Interceptors, Assault Frigates, Destroyers and Interdictors will all do a better job at this, on top of having their own unique abilities.

Many larger ships are also highly capable Frigate killers – snipers, drone boats, recons, missile ships. This is the real reason why Stealth Bombers fail to live up to our high expectations – their role is a common one.

So what rôle should a Stealth Bomber have? Well, that question has been the subject of many public debates. My personal solution would be to place a greater focus on the 'stealth' aspect by allowing them to cloak even when locked, and to remove the missile signature bonus. This would create a ship which is powerful enough to survive against larger vessels, but weak enough to be killed by other Frigates with ease.

For now, Stealth Bombers remain expensive gimmicks to toy around with on a rainy day. Just remember to put them away when you're done. ➡

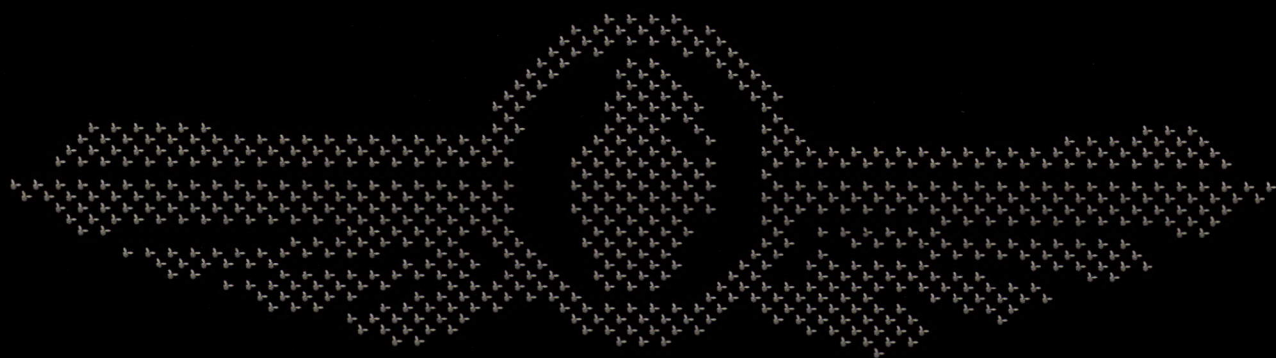


MANTICORE
Hull: Kestrel
Developer: Lai Dai
Number in service: 7816
Average price – all regions: 15,315,519



NEMESIS
Hull: Tristan
Developer: Duvelle Laboratories
Number in service: 3865
Average price – all regions: 6,187,872

NEXT ISSUE: TIER 3 BATTLESHIPS



NOW ANNOUNCE

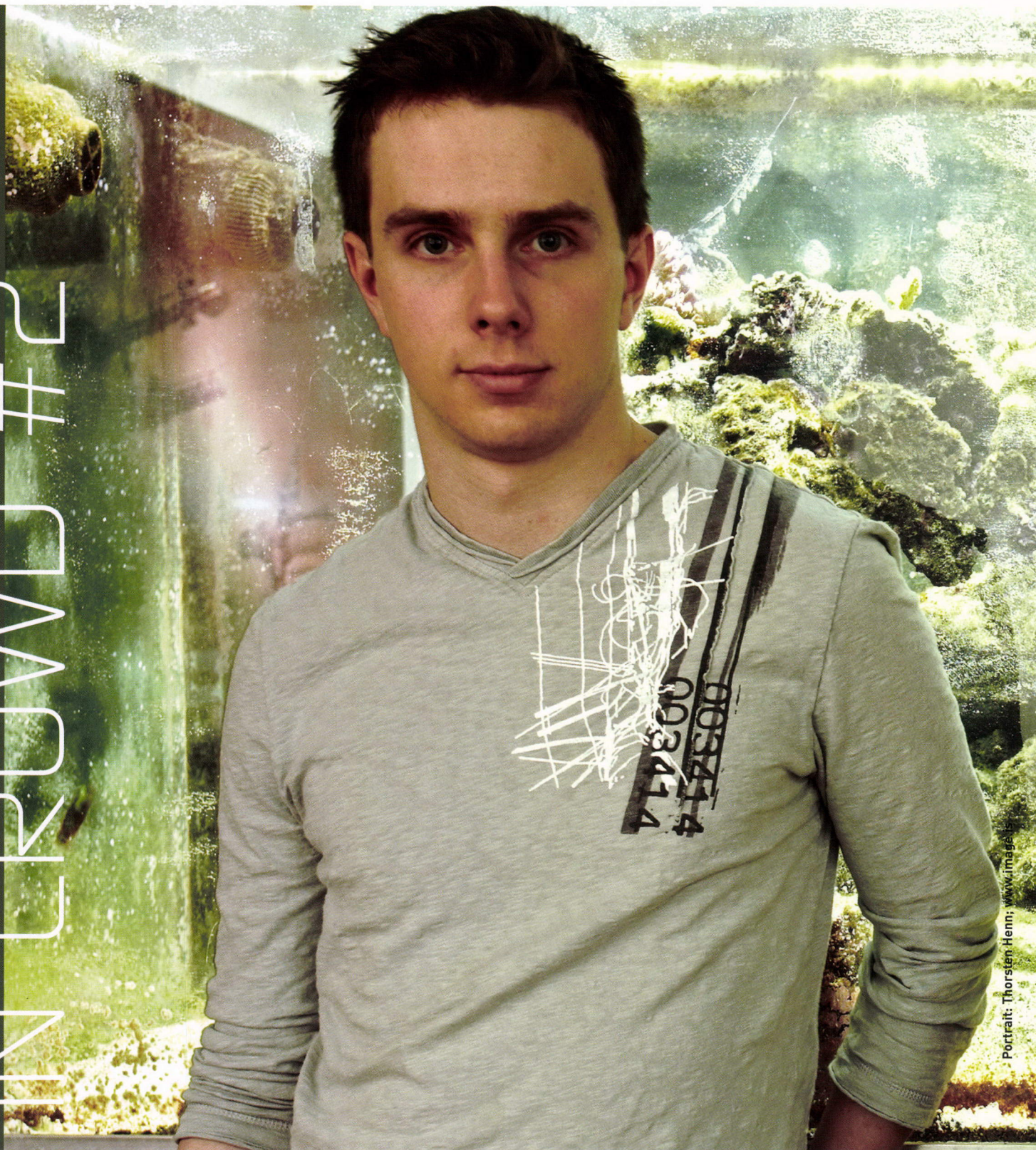
YOUR PRINT



DAN SPEED

CCP STARTDATE: March 2004
POSITION: Graphics Programmer
AKA: 'Redundancy'

IN CROWD #2



Portrait: Thorsten Henn; www.image.is

AND WHEN YOU'RE NOT WORKING..?

What's on your playlist?

Everyone just says my tastes are eclectic. Not much that's good for parties though, lots of stuff from the '60s-'80s, classical stuff, music with a tune and good lyrics.

Your favourite films?

Ghost in the Shell: SAC, Firefly, Family Guy, Tron, The Usual Suspects, Leon, Hero and *Batman Begins* (just to hit a few different types off the top of my head).

Do you read a lot?

I'll read almost anything science fiction and fantasy-based and regularly buy books on subjects I just want to learn about. Favourites... perhaps *Ender's Game*, *Snow Crash*, George R.R. Martin's *Song Of Ice And Fire* series, and J.V. Jones' *Sword Of Shadows* series.

Favourite games?

EVE(), *Total Annihilation*, *Deus Ex*, *Rainbow Six*, anything by Bioware, *Metal Gear Solid*, *Civ II*, *Final Fantasy VII*, *Mechwarrior 2*, *Battlefield 2*, *God Of War*, *Halo*, *Half-Life*, *Privateer*, *Rome: Total War*... actually I could keep going all day.

Will you be drinking and partying very much at Fanfest?

I've had to almost give up drinking since last year when I severely damaged my stomach and was constantly nauseous for almost six months.

What would your last meal be should you ever face execution?

I strongly object to capital punishment, which I don't feel has any place in a modern, civilised society.

Gruel it is then.

WHEN FLEET BATTLES BECOME TOO MUCH TO HANDLE, CCP LIKES TO WHEEL OUT THE BIG GUNS. THOSE GUNS DON'T COME ANY BIGGER THAN ITS IN-HOUSE GRAPHICS TROUBLESHOOTER, ECONOMIC THEORIZER AND OPTIMIZING ALL-STAR, DAN SPEED

How did you come to be working for CCP?

I'd pretty much decided that I wanted to work in computer games at the age of 14, when I was choosing my A levels in the UK with an eye on doing Computer Science. Before I went to university, I was programming simple games and getting involved in anything I could. I was lucky to get into EVE testing quite early, and worked hard at it (possibly to the detriment of other stuff), but this got me into the volunteer Bug Hunter group, and eventually I was running that group and writing software to make it operate more efficiently.

Once I finished my degree, I wrote some sample code for my portfolio (an AI pathfinder for EVE in C++) and gave CCP feedback on what it needed to do to make the EVE pathfinder perform well. At the time it was painfully slow and caused a whole lot of lag when loading your bookmarks after a jump. I sent Hilmar my resume with a request that he write a nice reference for me. Some time later, Hilmar got back to me and offered a job. I was in Iceland not long after. I've always felt I was lucky, but I know that it was down to persistence and dedication as well.

You're a graphics programmer, yes? What does that involve?

At the moment, it's mainly about designing and implementing the new structures and code we need for the DirectX 10 and extended DirectX 9 clients with Halldór (CCP's Chief Technology Officer). Then it's dreaming about all of the things we can do better that have bugged me for ages, or the things we want to do in the future. I've had to touch almost every part of EVE, from Blue (basically the Python engine and framework) to the Destiny physics engine and server code, and I'm frequently asked to help out on various stuff, so I never know specifically what I'll be doing day-to-day. Every day brings an interesting new challenge, and I wouldn't have it any other way.

You're known for your dedication in the field of optimization; constantly trying to speed up EVE and reduce graphical lag. Is it a thankless task?

If it's client performance that's the problem, then we're letting people down because they're not experiencing EVE to the full. You simply shouldn't have to think or worry about your client starting to choke with lots of NPCs, players or turret effects turned on. In the end, it's a fairly thankless task that's soon forgotten by most players, but not everything worthwhile is glamorous.

I don't want to feel trapped into an endless cycle of optimization for ever diminishing returns and never have anything that lets me say "I did that!" though. So it's that much nicer if we can address something while working on new features and improvements, which is something that EVE Vista is allowing. I won't hesitate to take a problem back to the game designers or artists if that's what's needed though – sometimes the right answer isn't to try and optimize the code, it's to look at the design or the art asset.

So do you often clash with designers and artists? Any heated exchanges you'd like to reveal?

It's always been friendly, since we're all just trying to do the best thing for the game. One of the reasons that Hilmar wanted me doing this job is that I practice art and 3D modelling as hobbies, and hopefully that helps me appreciate what the artists want to achieve. I think it's helped us discuss the alternatives and find the best solution for everyone in the past. I really enjoy working with the artists, and I think we have a good relationship, even if I look at them strangely when they come and ask for four normal maps to be used together on a particular asset.

In your Dev Blogs you seem to be happy to theorise on EVE's future direction. Does that make you a frustrated game designer deep down?

Absolutely! Isn't every real gamer? I take part in some of the discussions, but most of the people here who are or have been hardcore players also do that. I get fairly worked up about the 'vision' of EVE if I think someone doesn't get it, and I also tend to be fairly methodical and thorough when looking for problems with ideas. The real game designers often ask me for help with technical and mathematical issues, and occasionally ask questions that require some database query, so it's always been a blurry line, especially when so much is discussed with a beer in hand at the end of the day.

Do you think EVE's vision has changed over the years?

There have been a few changes in the detail, but the overall vision has been maintained and is consistent. EVE is about players interacting with players in a single huge world, where you can get ahead with cunning and/or by working together. It would be easy to fall back on importing game design ideas from other MMOs, but to do EVE justice we need to recognise that it's not another cookie-cutter game and that many things don't translate. EVE isn't about grinding your way to level 60, and nobody is powerless, not even a three-day old character.

When was the last time you looked at a game and thought 'now that's clever'?

In my opinion, programming exists to realise the art and game design, and it should be seen but not heard. The really clever, beautifully elegant solutions to technical issues, you'll probably never appreciate while you're playing, other than within the context of the game being fun or beautiful. I tend to appreciate the same things that everyone else appreciates, like a good graphics engine with good art direction, or great game design.

Possibly seeing the *Total War* games for the first time, after being used to seeing only a few units on the screen at once; or the lack of interface in *Fight Night: Round 3*. Both of these would have fallen apart without great game design and art driving them though. I can't wait to see how *Supreme Commander* turns out – at some level there's the realisation that there are huge technical issues in having thousands of units doing animation, simulation, pathfinding, AI and rendering gigantic, tactical maps... but in the end, I just want to play the games and enjoy them.

As one of the first Brits to work for CCP, what was it like moving to Iceland and how have you settled in?

I've moved around the world a lot, and I don't think Iceland has been particularly difficult when you've got the support of such a great company and group of people as CCP in a country where almost everyone speaks English. I still make fun of the Icelanders for their terrible driving and parking, and I miss the prices and choice that you get in shops in the UK. Reykjavik is a great place, and I prefer it to living in a larger city without so much personality.

Do you play much EVE, for fun?

One of the directors of the corporation that I'm in recently threatened to kick me out for inactivity; it was a joke, but I took the point about not killing enough people. My enthusiasm waxes and wanes like everyone else, but when you work on EVE, it's not like being a player who's taking a break, because the itch to dive back in doesn't come as strongly since you're always connected in some way. Living with a game 24/7 over a course of years – often quite stressfully – is a very different situation to just playing it for fun.

If you were a mere mortal, working to feed your EVE habit, would you be as hopelessly addicted to it?

Going from history, yes, I'd be as hopelessly addicted. I might have a few more kill mails and ISK to my name though. ☹

THE INSIDER'S GUIDE TO MISSIONS

PART 1



TEXT: ARRS GRAZZNIC

In between mission-running, manufacturing and dodging Caldari Navy missiles, Arrs Grazznic can be found dishing out advice on his favourite subject – some of it usually quite useful

WE'VE ALL TAKEN ON MISSIONS AT SOME POINT IN OUR EVE CAREERS. THE REWARDS CAN BE GREAT AND, AS KALI ROLLS OUT, THOSE REWARDS COULD BECOME IRRESISTIBLE. TIME, THEN, TO MAKE SENSE OF HOW MISSIONS FIT INTO THE EVE LANDSCAPE

☞ Love them or loath them, missions form a large part of the EVE-playing experience. Whether you are grinding missions for a Navy Raven offer, simply to earn piles of ISK for your toys, or just passing time waiting for corp mates before embarking on a mining expedition, chances are you've run a fair few missions during your career.

Missions can be an important source of ISK and minerals, but, as well as these benefits, the associated corporation and faction standing changes have a significant

role to play in the current game mechanics. It's also likely that standings will increase in importance with the introduction of 'Kali' and Factional Warfare, so it all becomes doubly important as we go forward with the game.

The main mission types require you to do one of the following actions: fly to a location and destroy ships found there (encounter or kill missions), or deliver certain items to a specific location (courier missions). The Journal entry for a mission, which flashes up whenever you accept an agent's job, will

indicate the specific mission type.

Courier missions entail moving goods from one station to another. These goods may be specific sealed cargoes or common market commodities. You may need to make multiple deliveries across many systems using an industrial transport ship, or the delivery may be able to fit into the hold of a Frigate and only involve a quick visit to the next system.

Encounter missions require you to blow stuff up in deadspace complexes (a.k.a. 'dungeons'). There are currently two types of encounter missions, those located in deadspace pockets where you warp to an acceleration gate prior to engaging with the NPCs, and those where you warp directly to a particular engagement.

The kill type of mission involves the pilot warping to a location (not a complex) and destroying the ships found there. Sometimes





these missions will involve multiple warps to different locations to deal with several spawns, or may just be a warp to a single location where single or multiple spawns arrive.

In addition there are also trade and mining missions available. Trade missions require a pilot to provide the agent with the goods requested in the mission briefing. These goods need to be purchased (or produced) by the pilot and delivered to the destination station. Mining missions require the pilot to deliver volumes of minerals or ore to a certain location. These items can either be mined and reprocessed directly by the pilot or purchased on the open market.

After every 16 regular missions completed, you will be offered a storyline mission. These will be one of the regular mission types but will differ by having an impact on your faction as well as corporation standing. The initial 16

missions can be completed for any agent, as long as those agents are aligned with the same faction and are at the same level as each other. The number of missions is not altered or reset by rejecting or failing an accepted mission.

SOME GREAT REWARDS

One of the main reasons people run missions is for financial gain. Through mission rewards, bounties and loot you can make mission-running a highly profitable experience. The level of rewards are derived from a number of factors, including the level of agent you are working for, the quality and effective quality of that agent, your security status and the system's security level. Basically, if you find a high-level agent plying his trade in 0.0 space, then you can bet your bottom ISK that he'll shower you with riches, unlike the skinflint mission brokers who sit in the plushy, comfortable surroundings of the core systems.

That said, mission rewards are not fixed. There is a dynamic algorithm in place that averages out the time it takes to complete each mission, so that the longer a mission takes the greater the rewards offered. The agent system automatically determines a mission's difficulty based on the average mission time, thus any two missions that generally take about the same amount of time to complete will give roughly the same level of rewards from the same agent. ↻



☉ The most obvious return on a mission is the base mission pay. This is the first ISK figure you see on the agent's offer and will vary greatly depending on the aforementioned factors. The second main reward is the bonus that you will be awarded if you complete the mission in a specified time. The bonus reward can be either cash or trade goods that the agent's corporation sells on the market.

For kill and encounter missions, you will also receive income in the form of pirate bounties and loot. In many circumstances, the bounties from kill missions greatly outweigh the agent's rewards for the mission itself. Not all ships have bounties, however. Rogue drones drop valuable alloys which can be sold or reprocessed and the main faction navies drop tags which can be traded for ISK.

Encounter missions usually have you zipping around several structures. Sometimes these structures will drop loot when destroyed, including implants, rare skillbooks and other items. It is best to review mission notes for each mission to see which structures have a chance to drop items and pop only those, leaving the rest for someone else.

Finally, all non-storyline agents also offer Loyalty Points (LP) for completing missions. The amount of points you get is mission specific, modified by the agent's base quality, the agent's solar system security rating and

your present skill levels in the relevant divisional connections skills.

LOYAL FAMILY

Once you have any LP with a given agent, you will periodically receive an invitation from that agent to exchange some of your accumulated LP for a particular offer (think supermarket loyalty cards). These offers are not limited to the agent's level but rather to the faction the agent is aligned with. When an agent makes you an offer, he will randomly select one from the 10 best offers he can give you (although it's unlikely to include 20 per cent discounts on organic broccoli).

Probably the most desired offers are the Divisional Connection skillbooks, which are available at 15,000 LP and can sell for anywhere between 50 and 200 million ISK. Other popular offers are attribute-enhancement implants. Each of these will be for one or more implants, each having a base LP value. A +1 attribute enhancement implant is offered at 1,500 LP, +2 implants are

offered at 9,000 LP, +3 implants at 15,000 LP, +4 at 100,000 LP and +5 at 450,000 LP. You can also be offered one, two, four or eight sets of these implants, so for example you may receive an offer of four +3 implants in exchange for 60,000 LP.

As a general rule of thumb you should aim for returns of around 1,000 ISK per LP. It is worth noting that if you turn down an offer from an agent they will not make a further offer until you have completed another mission for them.

AGENT QUALITY

Agents have a level, a quality and an effective quality. All these factors combine to define the difficulty of the mission you are offered and the level of rewards you will receive. The higher the agent level, the harder the missions. For combat, this means for level 1 agents you will face Frigates, with level 2 agents you will mostly fight Frigates but with some Cruisers added, at level 3 you will see mostly Cruisers and a few Battlecruisers, and with level 4

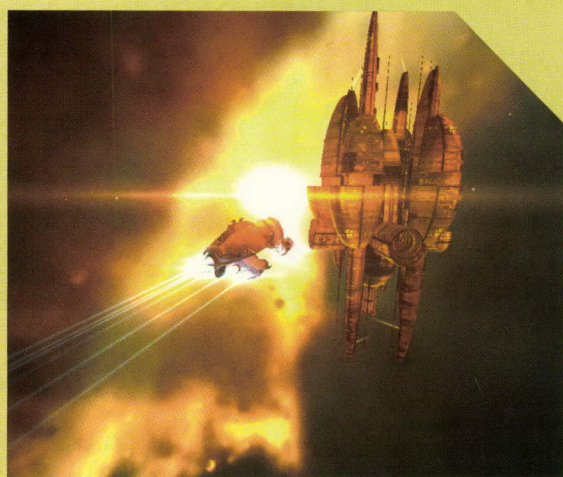
☉ IN MANY CIRCUMSTANCES, THE PIRATE BOUNTIES AND LOOT GAINED FROM KILL MISSIONS GREATLY OUTWEIGH THE AGENT'S REWARDS FOR THE MISSION ITSELF



BIG LOOT

There are a small number of missions that may spawn a pirate faction as part of the target ships. These rare spawns will give significantly higher bounties and may also drop valuable faction equipment. Faction spawns have been confirmed on the level four missions Worlds Collide, The Blockade and Gone Berserk.

The best place to find information on these is to visit the Mission chat channel in-game, or on the 'Inside EVE' message boards at the official EVE website.



AGENT DIVISIONS

Corporations are comprised of several divisions and each agent works for one of these divisions. All agents can give out all types of mission, but certain divisions favour certain mission types. The following indicates the most common type of mission offered for each Corporation Division:

Kill and Encounter Missions

Administration, Astrosurveying, Command, Intelligence, Internal Security, Security and Surveillance

Trade, Mining and Courier Missions

Accounting, Advisory, Archives, Distribution, Financial, Legal, Manufacturing, Marketing, Mining, Personnel, Production, Public Relations, R&D and Storage

There have been attempts to calculate the ratio of mission types offered by each division, but no definitive results have been seen. Also, according to some of the CCP developers, the mission type you are offered depends upon the ship you are flying when you request a mission. This, however, has not been validated by the pilot community, either.



agents you will be up against Battleships, Battlecruisers and lots of Cruisers and Frigates. For courier missions, this means larger deliveries and more jumps.

Agents also have a base quality, measured on a scale of -20 to +20, and an effective quality, rated between -30 and +55. An agent's base quality, coupled with their level, is used to determine whether you have access to the

agent's missions, while their effective quality is involved in calculating mission rewards. Effective quality is derived from an agent's base quality plus a combination of your skill and standing with that agent. Generally speaking, the higher an agent's effective quality, the better the mission rewards.

Additionally, each agent belongs to a corporation division. The agent's division

determines the type of mission they generally offer (see *Agent Divisions* panel above for more details on this).

STILL STANDING

Standings affect many features in the game. At the simplest level standing controls which agents you have access to. Beyond this, standing impacts upon a pilot's access to jump clones, their ability to anchor Player-Owned Structures in Empire space, amounts of minerals lost in the refining process and a whole host of costs, including sales taxes, research and factory costs. Further to that, if you have -5.0 standing or below with a given faction, you run the risk of being attacked by their navy when entering their space.


You can view your faction, corporation and agent standings via the 'Standings' tab on your character sheet. Agent availability is dependant on your corporation and faction standing, with each agent requiring you to have a certain standing to be able to work for them. The standings you need for a particular agent can be found on their 'Agent Info' tab.

STANDING UP

When you complete a mission you will get a base standing increase, which will depend on the perceived difficulty of the mission. This base standing increase is used to calculate the agent and corporation standing increase and is modified by how high you've trained your Social skill level.

The agent and corporation standing increase is stated as a percentage value. This is not simply added to your current standing, rather it defines the percentage change between your current standing and the maximum or minimum available standing.

You will receive agent and corporation standing losses if you fail to complete a mission or you let the mission timer run out. You will also receive a similar standing hit if you reject an offered mission within four hours of refusing an earlier mission from the same agent. So always be sure when cancelling an assignment or you'll suffer more than just ISK loss.

When you complete storyline missions, you will receive standing gains to the storyline agent's corporation and the faction that the corporation is aligned with (the primary faction). You will also 



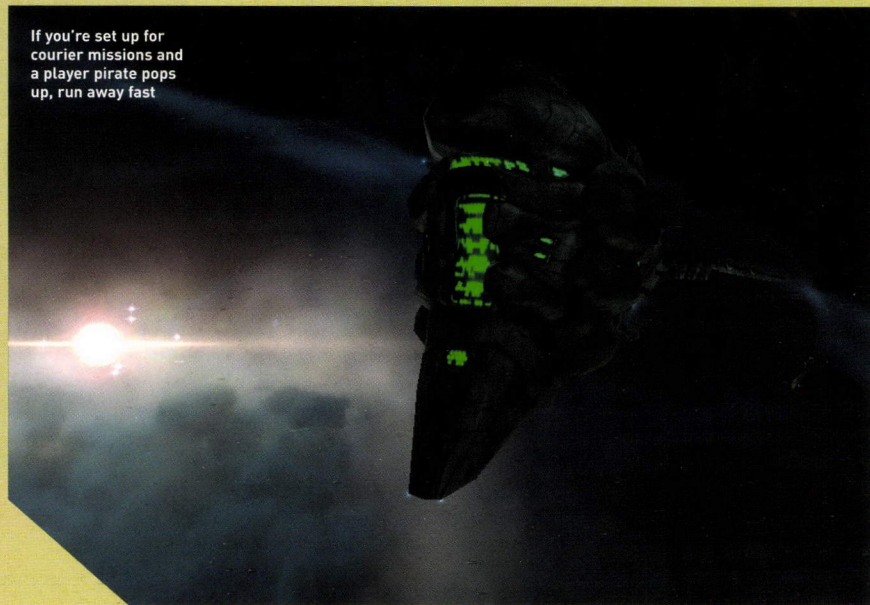
LOW SEC VS HIGH SEC

The security level of the system in which you are running missions greatly affects the rewards you receive. You will receive higher mission payouts and greater LP amounts the lower the system security level. The highest quality level four agents are all located outside of secure Empire space. According to the developers, there are certain high reward missions, such as Worlds Collide, that should only be offered in low sec systems.

While the rewards of running missions in lower security systems are much greater, so are the risks. It is not unheard of for mission runners to be ambushed by groups of player pirates in low security space. Techniques for safe-spot busting allow pirates to easily locate mission running pilots and warp to them for quick and easy kills.

Generally, when you set up your ship for mission running you fit for facing local rats, with the appropriate resists and damage types. While these fittings will work well on missions, they tend to be very poor PvP setups. Conversely, good PvP configurations tend to perform poorly as mission running ships. If you are mission running in low sec, you may want to review your setup to strike a balance between your NPC tank/gank configuration and the demands of PvP. If you are planning on running, fitting a few Warp Core Stabilizers may be a good idea, or if you are going to stand your ground and fight, NOS, Neuts and EW are possible modules you may want to fit. Whatever your choice, keep an eye on Local and be wary of unknown pilots.

If you're set up for courier missions and a player pirate pops up, run away fast



receive standing gains to other factions friendly to the primary faction, as well as standing hits to factions hostile to the primary faction. While the standing gains to the primary faction will continue as long as you complete their storyline missions, the impact on friendly and hostile faction standings is limited by their standing towards the primary faction. For example, the Minmatar Republic holds the Gallente Federation at a standing of +8.00. For every completed Gallente storyline mission you will gain Minmatar Republic standing; however, your standing towards the Republic will not raise above +8.00 as a result of these missions.

BACK DOWN

You should take note that you will also receive faction standing hits when you destroy certain ships belonging to those factions. Many pilots choose to avoid these 'faction kill' missions to help preserve their faction standings.

You can view the history of how your agent, corporation and factions standing changes through the 'Standings' tab on your character sheet. Select an entity, right click and select 'Show Transactions'. This will show a list of all your recent activity for that entity and list a standing change for each.

While it is possible to have good standings with agents, corporations and factions, it is also possible to have poor, negative standings with them. Apart from limiting your access to the best agents, negative standings do not have any significant implications until they fall

below -2.00. If an agent's standing with you is -2.00 or lower, that agent will not talk to you. At a corporation standing of -2.00 or lower, no agents in that corporation will offer you missions. A faction standing of -2.00 or lower means that you will not be able to get any missions from any of that faction's agents. Further, a faction standing of -5.0 or lower will result in that faction's navy vessels attacking you on sight when you enter their sovereign space. Which isn't helpful.

MAKING IT BETTER

There are a number of ways to fix bad standings. The simplest is to start running missions for the affected faction, but if your standings are too low you may not be able to do this. The next option is to train the Diplomacy skill; however, this also might not raise your standings to such a degree to allow you access to even the lowest quality agents. The third option is to run missions for a faction friendly to the affected faction and receive derived standing gains from storyline missions, lengthy a process though this is.

If none of the previous steps work, the last option open to you is to purposely fail storyline missions for factions hostile to the affected faction. This will result in corporation, primary faction and friendly faction standing losses, but at the same time will induce hostile faction standing gains.

The true mission-running professional will make sure that all their faction standings are in balance. They will do missions for all

factions and carefully check their standings levels to ensure they have access to as many agents as possible at all times.

REQUIRED SKILLS

The unpopular social skills are the mission-runner's friend. Alongside the offensive and defensive skills required to be able to deal with pirate threats, and the ship skills to be able to transport goods, the social skills improve your access to agents and the rewards you receive from them. They fall into two main categories, namely those relating to improving standings (which in turn improve mission pay) and those that directly improve mission rewards. There are five skills relating to standings: Social, Connections, Criminal



Connections, Diplomacy, and Negotiation.

The Social skill is the base skill for all the other social skills and must be trained to level three before you can train the others. As well as being the base skill, the Social skill improves the standing gains you receive for each mission you complete. Each trained level gives a five per cent bonus to the base mission standing increase rewarded by agents.

The next three skills all relate to agent, corporation and faction standings. Each level trained in these skills gives a four per cent bonus to effective standing towards all relevant entities. The Connections skill relates to friendly entities (i.e. those with whom you have a positive standing); the Diplomacy skill relates to hostile entities (i.e. those to whom you have a negative standing) and the Criminal Connections skill relates to criminal NPCs (i.e. those with low CONCORD standing).

The description for the Negotiation skill

states that it improves pay for agent missions by five per cent – but it achieves this indirectly by altering the agent’s effective quality.

As well as the skills that improve your standings, there are also nine further skills that improve the rewards you receive from missions. The seven Divisional Connections skills improve your LP gain by five per cent per level when working for agents in the related corporation divisions (see *Divisional Connections – Related Skills* table below).

Fast Talk improves the pilot’s effective security status, with each level trained giving a five per cent bonus to effective security rating. This improves mission payouts, as certain NPC pirates have their bounties increased depending on the security status of the pilot.

The final skill is DED Connections. Apparently this skill grants an additional 1,500 ISK bounty reward for each NPC pirate destroyed, but as it’s not actually seeded in-

game at the time of writing, its effect can’t be confirmed as yet.

IN SUMMARY

Next issue we’ll be looking at ways to maximise your earnings, how to set up your ships for certain missions, explain the art of looting and reveal what precise changes Kali will have introduced. Before then, I suggest you learn some skills, try to gain as much experience as you can and realise that not only can mission running be profitable as well as fun (especially in a group), but it can open all sorts of doors. While missions don’t reflect all that EVE has to offer, they can provide a distraction for older players and a source of income for new pilots. With the introduction of Factional Warfare in Kali, the standing gains and losses resulting from missions will take on greater significance and give mission runners something different to aim for. ☐



➡ A FACTION STANDING OF -5.0 OR LOWER WILL RESULT IN THAT FACTION’S NAVY VESSELS ATTACKING YOU ON SIGHT WHEN YOU ENTER THEIR SOVEREIGN SPACE. WHICH ISN’T HELPFUL

	Bureaucratic	Financial	High Tech	Labor	Military	Political	Trade
Accounting		●					●
Administration	●					●	
Advisory			●			●	
Archive	●		●				
Astrosurveying				●	●		
Command					●	●	
Distribution		●					●
Financial	●	●					
Intelligence			●		●		
Internal Security	●				●		
Legal		●				●	
Manufacturing			●	●			
Marketing		●					●
Mining				●			●
Personnel	●			●			
Production				●			●
Public Relations		●				●	
R&D			●	●			
Security					●	●	
Storage	●						●
Surveillance			●		●		

DIVISIONAL CONNECTION – RELATED SKILLS

Each agent belongs to a division and each division has two related Divisional Connection skills as shown in the table to the left. These Divisional Connections skillbooks are only available through agent LP offers and command a high price on the market and in escrow. The increase to the mission LP offer can be calculated with the following complicated formula:

Actual LP Reward = Base LP Reward x (1 + (0.05 x (Level of Connection Skill 1 + Level of Connection Skill 2)))

Further details of how skills affect agent availability and rewards are at: www.newedenlibrary.net/eon/skills.shtml



We've all found ourselves mining asteroids at some time or another, whether it was for five minutes at the start of our EVE careers or currently as a full-time profession. With the advent of POS (or 'Player-Owned Structures') we now have the opportunity to mine moons. While asteroids yield ore that is refined into minerals used in Tech I production, moons yield minerals that need to be reacted together to produce advanced materials for Tech II production.

So, how do we mine moons? First you need to establish a POS, which is essentially a mini starbase that belongs to your corp, nearby the moon of choice. The POS is the driving force behind the Tech II market, but they have also been put to extensive military use in planned 0.0 regional invasions and serve a key role in outpost defence. They can also be used as factories and laboratories using special modules. This guide, however, will focus on the moon-mining aspect of the POS rather than its military or other industrial uses.

SCANNING YOUR MOONS

Unlike asteroids, whose types are clearly marked, the mineral content of a moon is not immediately known. It has to be scanned using a survey probe to discover its contents. Also, unlike asteroids, each moon can have up to four minerals present. Most moon materials will be marked on a scan as 'Abundance 1' but occasionally you'll find 2s or even 3s or 4s. Abundance currently doesn't do anything, but it's rumoured to be a planned feature linked to Tech II Moon Harvesting Arrays.

To scan a moon you'll require a scan probe launcher and several survey probes. Warp to

the moon you wish to inspect, fly your ship in close until you're pointing towards it and launch a survey probe. Don't worry about it reaching the moon – even if it seems that it will not get there, if you've aimed properly it will. After its flight duration, it will report back the results of whatever materials, if any, are present within the planetary satellite. You don't even need to stick around. You can keep scanning other moons until the duration is up. However, if you log out, jump into another system or dock, communication with your scan probes currently in space will be lost and you will have to start again.

Scan probe launchers, unlike normal launchers, do not take up a ship's launcher hardpoint. You can fit them to any ship with a high slot, making vessels such as the Iteron Mk III a popular choice for moon scanning as they can fit a scan probe launcher and hold hundreds of survey probes in the cargo hold. Rather obviously, high cargo capacity, high warp speed and high ship agility are aspects to look for when shopping for a decent probe vessel; one that allows you to carry a lot of probes, get to the next moon in the list fast and align to it as fast as possible.

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

The very smallest moon-mining operation requires no more than 150-200 million ISK to start up and this can certainly see some profit. This setup consists of a small control tower, which is the central nexus of the POS, a moon-harvesting array, a silo to hold the material harvested and, of course, fuel. Unlike mining lasers that you use on asteroids, the moon miner (or harvesting array) is fully

automated and works 24/7, even through downtime. Once the modules are anchored, brought online, the material type is selected and the miner linked to the silo using the POS management interface, 100 units of the material you are mining will be dropped into the silo every hour. Some raw materials can be sold for more than the fuel cost of the POS, making mining them a profitable venture.

THE NEXT STEP

While selling raw materials may be profitable and require a low initial investment, it doesn't bring in much ISK. To expand your POS development, you could set up more small mining bases, but that'll just add to the trickle rather than flood ISK into your wallet. What you really want to do is start a reaction. ☞



THE INSIDER'S GUIDE TO MOON MINING

YOU'VE MINED ASTEROIDS BEFORE, BUT HAVE YOU EVER MINED A MOON?
WITH A PROPERLY SET UP POS YOU CAN, AND MAKE ISK WHILE YOU
SLEEP. OR WHILST YOU'RE AWAKE, OR DOWN THE PUB, OR...



TEXT: NYPHUR

CEO of Pillowsoft Corporation, Nyphur is the
ISS Regional Coordinator for Providence, from
where he runs – you guessed it – a large,
successful moon-mining operation



NAME	VIEW	TAKE
Moon Harvesting Array	Role	Role
Silo	Role	Role
Photon Scattering Array	Role	Role
Silo	Role	Role
Silo	Role	Role
Condari Control Tower	Role	Role
Reactor Array	Role	Role
Explosion Dampening Array	Role	Role
Medium Reactor Array	Role	Role
Corporate Hangar Array	Role	Role
Large Artillery Battery	Role	Role
Moon Harvesting Array	Role	Role

⊕ This is where things get complicated, but I will try to keep it simple. Two raw materials mined with Moon Harvesting Arrays can be reacted together in a Medium Reactor Array, which needs a blueprint for the appropriate reaction, to produce a new material. This material is called an 'intermediate' and a list of them can be found in the Reactions Table at www.eve-tanking.com/reactions.html, while an example of the process can be seen in the 'A Simple Reaction' panel (below right).

Moon Harvesting Arrays set to mine the materials required for a reaction, or silos set to hold the materials required (and then filled with purchased raw materials) are linked to the reactor's input. The input is on the left-hand side of the POS management array, while the output on the right is then linked to a silo configured to hold the intermediate material. Once properly linked and online, the reactor will take in 100 units of each input material per hour and will output 200 units of the intermediate material at the same time.

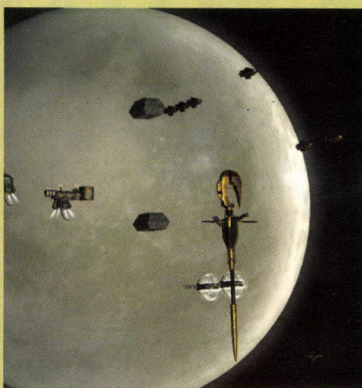
Unfortunately, due to the reactor array using 1500 CPU and the silos using 500 CPU each, a medium reaction cannot be done on a small tower. It requires at least a medium tower and since they use twice as much fuel as a small tower, reacting will cost you twice as much per week than simply selling your raw materials. Take this into account when assessing your profit margins.

THE BIG MONEY

The final step in the moon-mining chain is the complex reaction. As you can see from the Reaction Table, intermediate materials can be reacted together to form advanced materials like Crystalline Carbonide and Ferrogel. Unlike simple reactions, these cannot take

➡ **ONE FUELLING STRATEGY IS TO KEEP A STOCKPILE OF ONE WEEK'S FUEL IN THE CORPORATE HANGAR ARRAY, THEN TOP THE FUEL UP DAILY FROM THAT. THIS HAS ONE WEEK'S SUPPLY ADDED EACH WEEK, AT THE SAME TIME HAULING THE PRODUCT BACK TO THE NEAREST STATION FOR SALE**

Two POSs seen from inside the force field. The control tower can be seen along with some anchored modules



place in a medium reactor array but must take place in a full-sized 'Reactor Array', which uses twice as much CPU as its medium counterpart. Due to this, medium towers are not suitable to run a complex reaction. Instead, complex reactions must be run on large control towers only.

Also, unlike simple reactions, they may take up to four different intermediate reactions to produce a single product, as is the case with Ferrogel, and they do not produce 200 units per hour but rather a large amount which varies from reaction to reaction. If in doubt, check the Reaction Table or look up the reaction blueprint info in-game.

These advanced materials are then used to build Tech II components which are used to build Tech II modules, ammo and ships. Since producing advanced materials is the ultimate purpose of moon mining, they sell very well, more than justifying the double fuel bill over a medium tower and the 500-700 million ISK price tag on a large control tower and modules. Selling intermediate materials is often very difficult, but if you can react them into an advanced material, sales will be swift and more than worthwhile.

Remember to check the market value of the materials you are selling. One good method for doing this is with the market tool available at www.eve-central.com.

FUEL PROXIMITY

Starbases use ice products from refined ice as fuel, as well as NPC-sold industrial trade goods. It is a good idea to have your fuel supply nearby the POS to minimise hauling when it's time to refuel and haul the product back for sale. One successful fuelling strategy, and the one I use myself, is to keep a stockpile of at least one week's fuel in the corporate hangar array at the POS, then top the fuel up daily from that. The stockpile has one week's supply added each week, at the same time that I haul the product back to the nearest station. This means I only need to actually haul to and from my POS once per week.

An additional note is that you can simply mine your own fuel if there is an ice belt in the system. All you need to do in that case is haul industrial trade goods in. Since each race's POS uses a different type of isotope to fuel the shield, this is only really useful if your POS is of the right race for the type of ice you are planning on mining.

Be aware that ice refines at 100% efficiency at a POS refinery if you have a good level in refining, compared to a much lower yield for refining in stations. Even the worst POS refinery will refine ice at 100% and it only needs to be online for a few hours while you are refining, so you can keep it offline when

The Corporate Hangar Array functions like a corp hangar and can hold up to 1.4 million cubic metres



EFFICIENCY – COUPLING ARRAYS

These misunderstood little silos are all-too often misused. New POS engineers will assume they must put one between their miner and silo or their reactor and silo. The intended use is that they be placed in those positions so that when the silo is offline, product is temporarily stored in the coupling array so that it isn't lost. The reality is that these are nothing more than tiny silos and you can simply omit them from the setup and link miners and/or reactors straight to the silos. If your POS cycles while the silo is offline, however, one hour's worth of product is lost. There is a trick to that too. Simply remove some of your fuel so you have less than 24 hours worth, and wait for your POS to mail you saying it has low fuel. The time on the mail will be the time your POS cycles. If you remember that time and simply make sure you don't have the silo offline for emptying during that time, you won't miss any product. A better use for coupling arrays is to link two together. They can hold approximately 15 hours of product each for a total of 30 hours. If you empty your silos daily, this won't be a problem and the CPU saved by using a double-coupler instead of a silo can make some very efficient and tight setups work. At 155 CPU per coupler and 500 per silo, you save 190 CPU by using a double-coupler instead of a silo.

not in use to save CPU. This means that it is possible to run a small POS as an ice refinery.

SECURITY ISSUES

Security ratings for the systems you use are a bit of a non-issue. A POS can only be placed in a system that is below a true security rating of 0.4. The exception is that you can place one as far up as 0.7 if you have good enough standings with the faction that hold sovereignty in the system. These 'high sec' structures cannot run reactors or mine materials and are used for supplementing factory and laboratory services in your area, as well as for use as bases of operation in systems without stations. However, without moon mining and reacting to bring in cash, a POS in a high security system is a hard one to make profitable. True security ratings can be seen on websites such as pvp.dk/evsys.php.

WHERE TO SELL PRODUCT

As everyone knows, the centre of trade in the EVE universe is currently Jita. With POS products, from raw materials to intermediates and all the way to complex materials or even Tech II components, should you choose to build them, Jita's market is the throbbing hub of trade. Indeed, wherever in the universe you produce your product, selling in Jita is your best bet. A close second would be Oursulaert, where a lot of the Tech II producers and component suppliers purchase their materials if the Jita market is scarce and where some producers are based. So making those few extra jumps to Oursulaert could prove profitable as well.

The ideal situation for many, however, is to get a sale contract. Many people will buy some or all of your product at the source or at the nearest 0.5 or above system to your POS network, minimising the work you have to do. Some others will pay above the market value for you to move it straight to their home base and sell it to them there.

Often they are looking for a discount over market prices but a good buyer or heavy Tech II producer will offer more than market value for your products, knowing that a regular product keeps their industrial operation running consistently and smoothly. For supply contracts, either buying or selling, try the channel 'POS Funtime' in-game.

EFFICIENCY

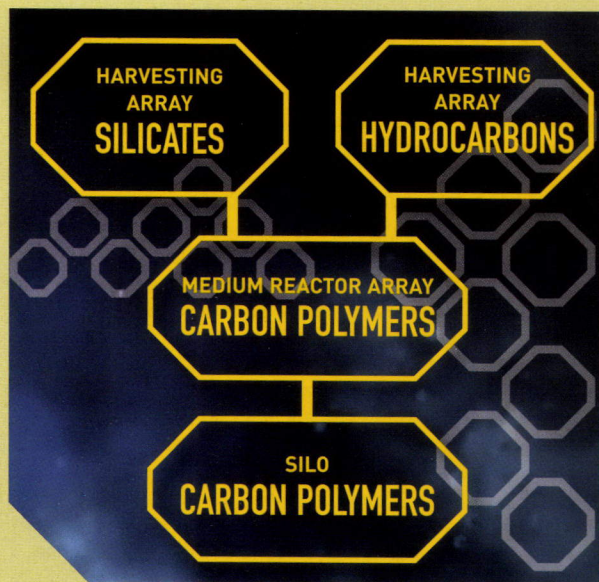
To make the big money with a POS, you have to keep your operation running as efficiently as possible. This means lowering fuel costs and initial investment, maximising sale prices and minimising time and effort spent. Luckily, there are a lot of tricks to keeping your operation efficient, both in profit and time.

The single biggest key to efficient moon mining operations has to be using Caldari large towers. There is no doubt about this one – Caldari towers are simply all-round better for industry due to their massive CPU load. This is because all industrial modules, such as reactors, refineries, silos, etc use a large amount of CPU. The Caldari large tower, specifically, has enough CPU that it can do something no other tower can – successfully run both a simple and a complex reaction ☺



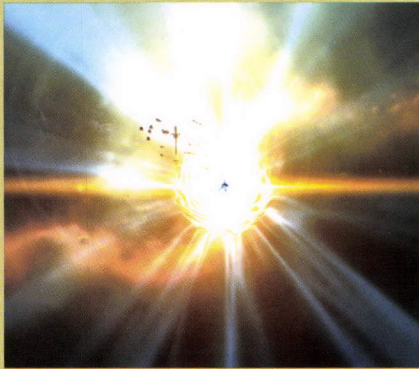
A SIMPLE REACTION

An example of a simple reaction is shown in the diagram here. This reaction is for producing Carbon Polymers on a moon with both silicates and hydrocarbons (a common occurrence). Details can be found online at: www.eve-online.com/itemdatabase/manufactureresearch/reactions/simplereactions/17942.asp.



Remember to scan
moons for active
POS before
warping to them

The Corporate
Hangar Array can
be left offline to
conserve fuel
when not
being used



☞ on the same tower. In fact, a medium Caldari POS could feasibly run a complex reaction using coupling arrays to feed it and collect materials, though this would need to be attended to every 15 hours.

Setting up near a station or outpost will dramatically cut down hauling, as you can hire a freighter to go from there to Jita and back for fuel and selling product. In addition, a common operations strategy is to simply empty the silos daily into a corporate hangar array, then haul it all to a station once a week. This drastically minimises hauling. Since all of my setups use 100% of the available CPU, not leaving any room for a corporate hangar array, I

keep one anchored but offline. You can take items out of it when it is offline but you can only put items into it when it's online. Therefore, the only times when I need it online are when I am emptying the silos into it, in which case the silo is offline and not using CPU. In that way, I technically have enough CPU spare to use the corporate hangar array.

There are also a good number of ways to cut your fuel bills and thus

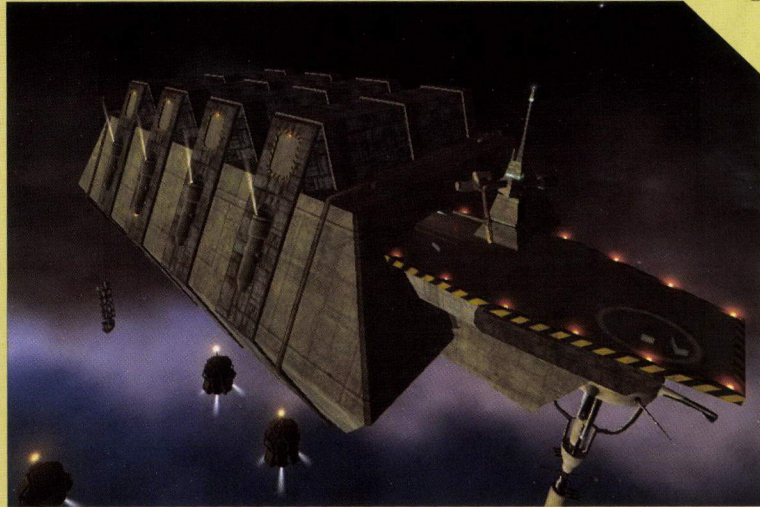
increase profit. If you set up your POS in 0.0, say as part of an alliance like the Interstellar Starbase Syndicate, you can claim a sovereignty bonus. A POS in a system in which your alliance has sovereignty benefits from a 25% reduction in fuel usage. That translates directly to increased profit and reduced fuel hauling. However, the risk of hauling in and out of 0.0 may make it no longer worthwhile. Thus, be sure to consider the pros and cons carefully.

ENERGY SAVING

Another fuel saver is to simply keep modules offline when not in use. Offline modules don't use any CPU or powergrid. While not advised for 0.0 POS, you may be able to get away with setting up guns on your POS but keeping them offline. If you are online when an attack occurs, you can quickly switch them back on. This comes with a great deal of risk and I personally do not advise it if your POS is not in Empire space.

Meanwhile, modules such as the corporate hangar array and ship maintenance array can be run for free by switching them online only when needed. They will only contribute to fuel usage if they are online when the POS makes its hourly cycle.

Another way to minimise time is to have an alternate character in your corporation and stationed at the POS with the required roles to switch modules on and offline and with access to the hangar. They can empty the silos daily in a matter of minutes and with zero travel time. If you place the silos next to the hangar array, they need nothing more than a shuttle to do so, too. And if there is fuel in the



☞ WHEN PEOPLE THINK OF PLAYER-OWNED STRUCTURE DEFENCES, THEY THINK GUNS. LOTS OF GUNS. THIS ISN'T NECESSARILY THE BEST SOLUTION

DEFENCE — HITTING THE PAUSE BUTTON

Your primary line of defense will not be your guns. In fact, if someone resolves to destroy your POS, has the resources to hand and can field Dreadnoughts in siege mode, your guns will not help unless you turn up during the siege. Your primary line of defense is strontium clathrates – it's ironic that the same thing the Dreadnoughts will be using to tear your POS down will help to keep it up.

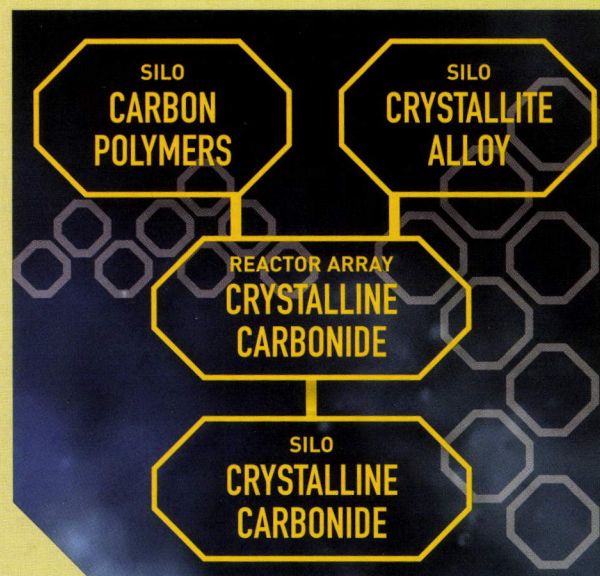
This acts as a sort of 'pause button' to give you time to react. Your POS fuel tank can hold strontium clathrates. Should the shield be reduced to 25%, it will go into reinforced mode and start consuming the strontium. In reinforced mode, your POS is invulnerable but it cannot regenerate shield, and no modules which require CPU will work. Guns which only require powergrid will work fine. Despite the official word that they consume fuel at an accelerated rate in reinforced mode, they actually only consume the strontium clathrates.

The purpose of strontium is to give you some time to get a force together. If the enemy comes back once your POS comes out of reinforced mode, you should be ready for him. If he doesn't, the shield will regenerate. You can also use remote shield boosters once out of reinforced mode.

Since the POS does not use normal fuel in reinforced mode, you can put as much strontium into the fuel tank as will fit, providing there's enough space left for fuel for normal operations. Since your tower cannot function industrially in reinforced mode, however, there is a practical limit to how much strontium you can keep in the tower. Too much and you'll lose valuable production time.

A COMPLEX REACTION

An example of a complex reaction is shown below. This reaction is for Crystalline Carbonide, being fed with its two component intermediate materials from silos. Details can be found online at: www.eve-online.com/itemdatabase/manufactureresearch/reactions/complexreactions/17963.asp.



hangar and it is close enough to the tower, you can even top the fuel up that way.

GUNS OUT

When people think of POS defences, they think guns. Lots of guns. This isn't necessarily the best solution. While a good gun setup is effective at taking out Battleships, Cruisers, Frigates and all their Tech II equivalents, it's not so hot against Dreadnoughts. The issue is siege mode. A Dreadnought in siege mode is immune to Electronic Warfare and has an insanely large bonus to its tank.

When setting up guns, there are two main avenues of thought. A well-rounded setup including a mixture of small, medium and large gun arrays is a popular choice. The idea is to be able to destroy anything Battleship-sized or smaller. The downside is that it'll be pathetically weak against a Dreadnought and won't make a dent if it's in siege mode.

Another common tactic is to load as many large guns as the powergrid will allow. The idea here is to maximise the damage dealt to Dreadnoughts. It may have about a 50% chance to destroy one before it gets into siege mode and its tank kicks in. It can achieve a large amount of damage with Amarr towers and an absolutely massive amount with Minmatar towers, given their special bonuses.

In the past I have seen Frigate swarms fly around starbases to waste the ammo so that a larger siege force could come in unharmed. It's worth mentioning that a Frigate swarm would give any Dreadnought time to enter siege mode and turn on its tank, at which point they would be pretty much invulnerable to anything an unassisted POS can output. Therefore, I believe that the idea of fitting a large number of large guns is ineffective.

Some more effective methods of defence, in conjunction with a good, well-rounded gun setup, include heavy webbing, scrambling and ECM. Fitting a large number of webbers will make a Frigate fleet a lot less effective as they get popped by your small guns. The scramblers ensure they can't get away. ECM serves a useful purpose, especially on a Caldari

tower. ECM modules have a guaranteed jamming rate on any ship, making them a very powerful but limited resource.

MAKE THEM PAY

It is my firm belief that the best way to defend a POS is to make it not worth the effort for the attacker. To do this, you need to first increase the cost and risk to the attacker. The first step is to force your opponent to have to use Dreadnoughts in siege mode. This is easily achieved by putting up a defence force that Battleships and smaller ships cannot stand up to. A mixture of small, medium and large gun arrays and webbers will work. Scramblers will force them to face the reality that any ship that goes in bar a sieging Dreadnought will explode. This combo is often enough to put them off. Add some ECM and you have a tidy setup.


Note that Dreads are immune to ECM when in siege mode, making it possible to force Dreads to use siege mode against even medium towers with well set-up ECM and guns. Ideally, Caldari towers are used here for the ECM cycle speed bonus.

The next step is to increase the cost of their

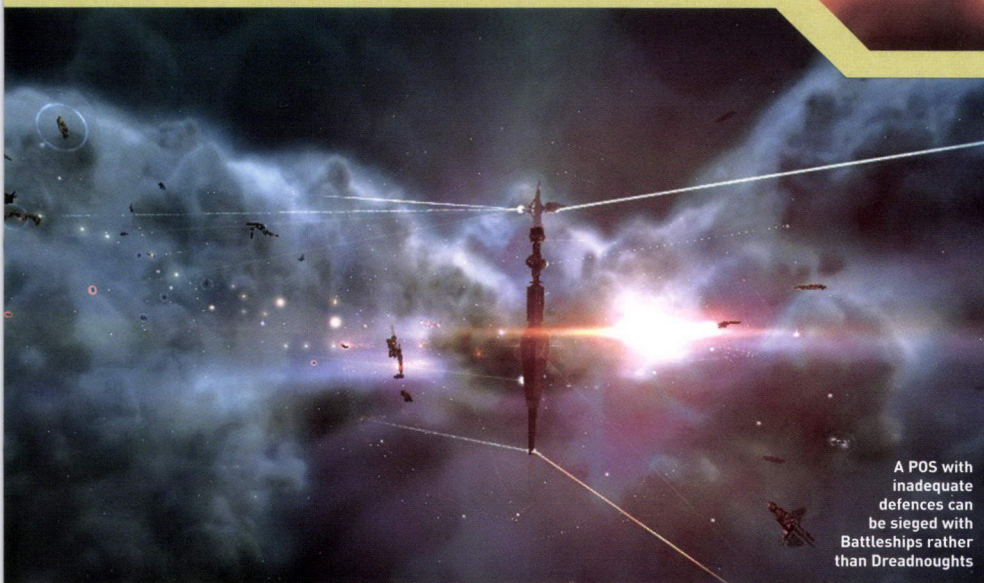
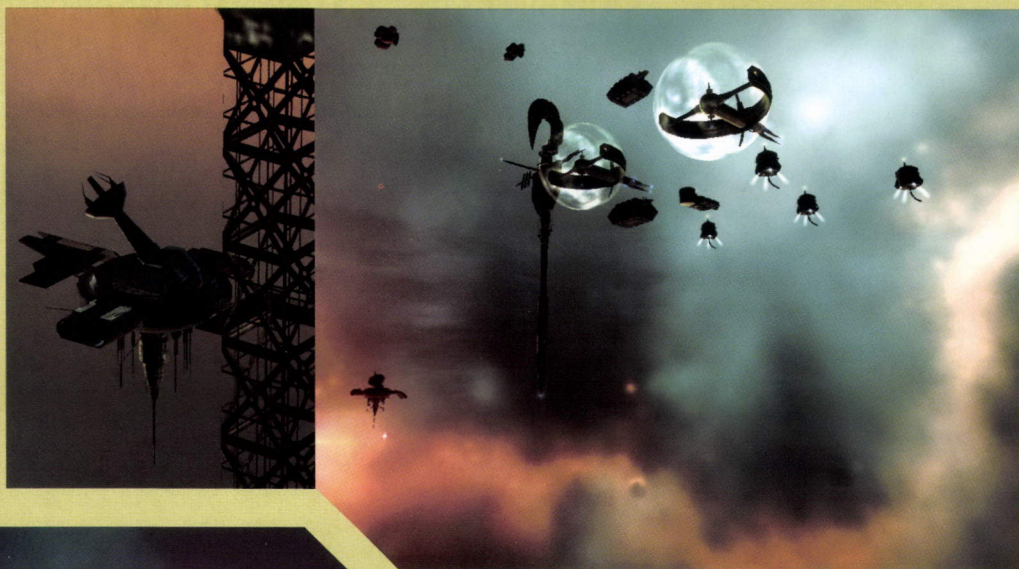
siege. Now that they are using Dreadnoughts, they will consume strontium clathrates to maintain siege mode. This means that the longer the siege continues, the longer they will be expending strontium and the more ISK they burn. This can be increased by running shield-hardening arrays to increase the POS' shield resistances. Also, the Caldari tower has the most shield hit points, at fifty million.

Every minute that the enemy has a Dreadnought fielded is a minute they risk losing a ship worth several billion ISK to a well-planned counter-attack. The key is to keep enemy Dreadnoughts engaged for as long as possible as you plan a co-ordinated counter-attack.

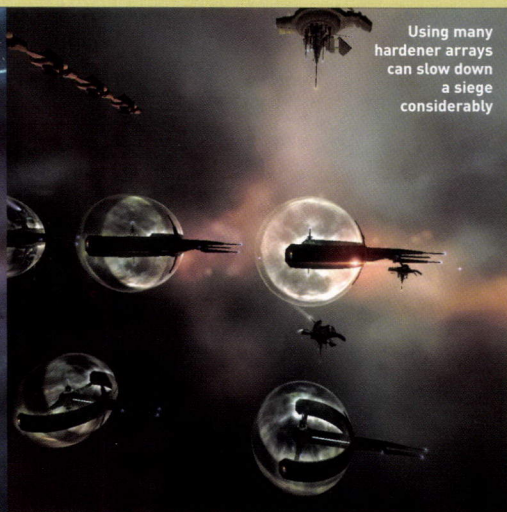
IN SUMMARY

From the smallest corps right up to the huge corporate monsters and alliances, moon mining can be a very profitable industry that, unlike other things in EVE, can make you plenty of ISK while you sleep. If you follow the advice in this guide, you too can join the long line of corporations with their very own automatic ISK printing machine. 

Guns are not the only defence; Electronic Warfare, warp scrambling batteries and hardeners can all play their part



A POS with inadequate defences can be sieged with Battleships rather than Dreadnoughts



Using many hardener arrays can slow down a siege considerably

THE INSIDER'S GUIDE TO

EVE:
THE SECOND
GENESIS CCG

➡ The two starter kits – The Day Of Darkness and The Great War – provide two pre-constructed decks each, four decks in total which are themed around each of the four major empires of the EVE universe. Each deck is roughly similar, in that each contains equivalent proportions of ship, location, news and starbase cards. The majority of the cards are of common rarity, and the decks do not contain any foil cards. Ultimately, they serve as an easy introduction to the game, and thus an ideal starting point for your own attempts at effective deck construction.

The booster packs contain a random assortment of cards – although the number of cards of each rarity type is fixed (and identical) for each booster, you never know exactly which cards you'll get from pack to pack. Hence, an enterprising collector will need to obtain a number of booster packs to expand their collection, trading spare cards with, or purchasing specific single cards from, other players to complete their collection.

After opening your cards you should take some time to put them into a sensible kind of order so that you can search through them easily. Different players will prefer to do this in different ways, sometimes by card type, sometimes by name, alphabetical order, or even by set number order.

CARDS & GAME CONCEPTS

The EVE card game has a very simple premise: to win you must destroy the starbase controlled by your opponent (there are a number of other victory conditions offered by cards that can be put into play, but we will ignore those for the moment). To attack your opponent's starbase, and to defend your own, you will need a number of ships. To build ships you will need money, and the larger or more powerful the ship then the more ISK it will require to construct. Hence, when you build your own EVE deck you need to make sure you have both enough ships and income-generating cards to achieve these goals.

When considering your income sources, remember that ISK can be generated in two

IF YOU'VE NEVER PLAYED A STRATEGY CARD GAME SUCH AS *EVE: THE SECOND GENESIS* BEFORE, THEN THE PROCESS OF OPENING UP YOUR CARDS AND PUTTING TOGETHER DECKS TO PLAY MAY BE QUITE BAFFLING. HERE, THEN, IS AN OVERVIEW OF THE GAME AND THE METHODOLOGY YOU SHOULD EMPLOY TO BUILD A WINNING HAND



TEXT: BODA KHAN

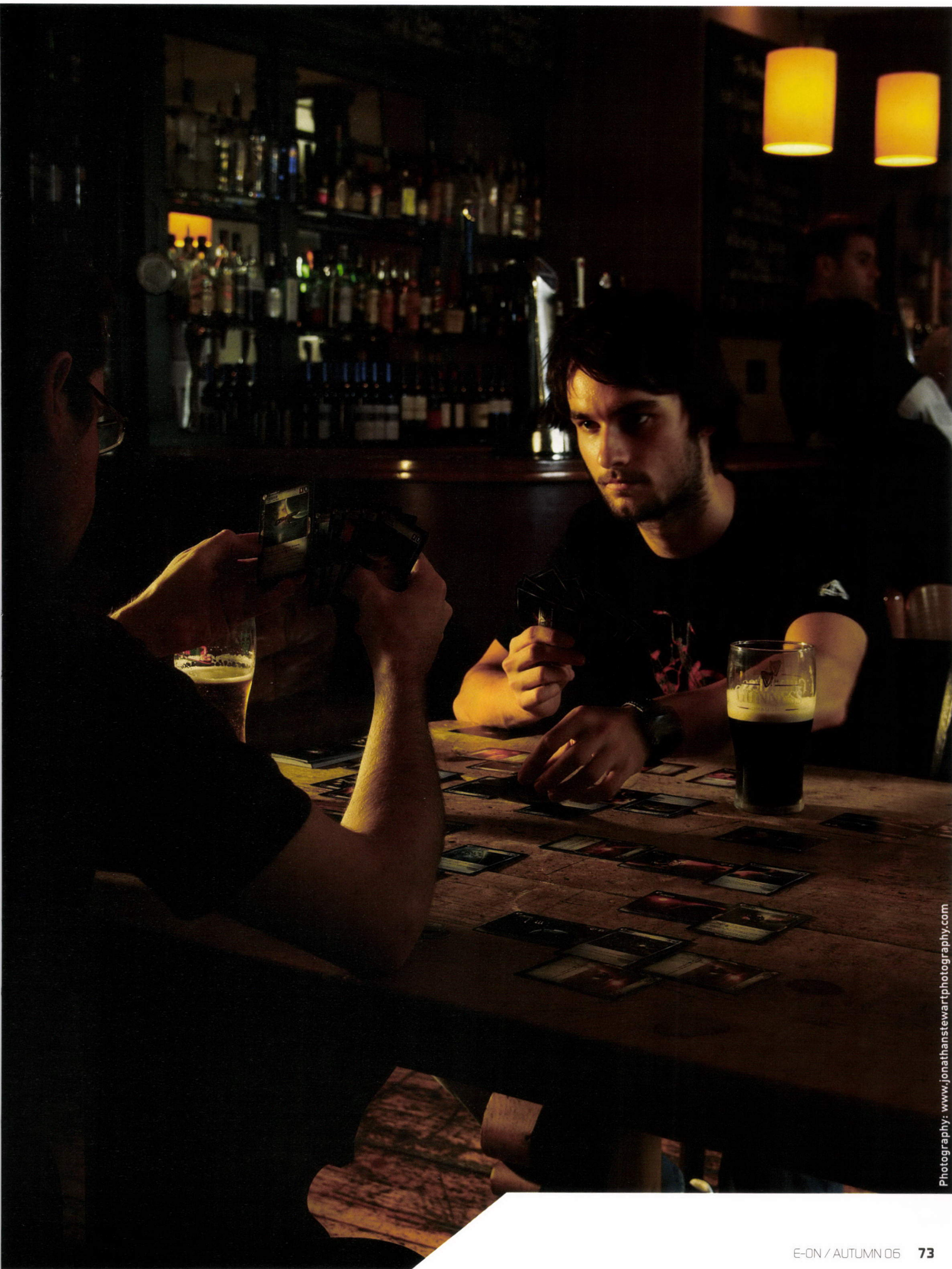
When it comes to games that require no electrical supply, Ms. Khan is as knowledgeable as anyone in the EVE universe. Her hopscotch skills are second-to-none.

ways. The first, and most straightforward method, is to play and control a number of location and starbase structure cards which provide their own inherent income bonuses. Generally, the income from these cards is quite low, and you need to play a number of them over successive turns to generate a reasonable amount. The inherent income from Outer Regions can be a little higher but to control and defend them against your opponent requires considerably more resources. Much higher levels of income can be gained from mining, hauling and trading. However, this is also more complicated because you need to build ships with the relevant command traits first before you can take advantage of them.

News cards are interesting because the majority of them do not directly assist you in building ships or gaining money, but they can nevertheless complement your winning strategies in a variety of ways. Furthermore, news is the only type of card that you can play during your opponent's turn (if it should be applicable). News cards should be your next most important deck consideration after ships and income. ☺



THE SECOND GENESIS





Ⓢ BUILDING YOUR FIRST DECK

The rulebook states that your market should contain a minimum of 52 cards, and that it should contain no more than four copies of a single card. The four-card limit means that you cannot simply stack the market with large numbers of your favourite cards, and it instead forces you to think more strategically about what other cards you should put into your market as well. Also, because of simple probability, the higher the total number of cards in the market, the less likely you are to draw a particular card at any given time. In fact, to maximise your probability of seeing a particular card you should always build decks of 52 cards, and no larger.

If you consider each card of your 52-card market as a slot that needs to be filled, then this allows you to think a little more abstractly about how to fill it. For example, if you fill 13 slots of the deck with location cards, this gives you a simple 1-in-4 (or 25%) chance of drawing a location as your first card from the top of your deck. If you fill 26 card slots of the deck with ships, then this gives you a 1-in-2 (50%) chance of instead drawing a ship, and a 1-in-4 (25%) chance of drawing anything else (i.e. news or starbase structure cards).

You don't need to be a maths whiz to see that by varying the exact proportions of each card type you can affect the frequency of what you draw from your deck, which in turn will help you win the game (see *Doing The Real Math* overleaf for details). If you really don't know where to start, try boosting a starter deck so that it contains 12 locations, 24 ships, 12 news cards and four starbase structures and then tinker with the relative proportions from there.

Another rule of thumb is that you should normally try to skew the costs of your cards towards cheaper values. For example, if you include 20 ship cards in your deck, at least half (50%) of them should cost 4 ISK or less. If you pack too many expensive cards in your deck, then unless you are very confident in your ability to generate income quickly, there is a danger that you will draw too many too early in the game, and be unable to put them into play, possibly having to discard them before you have the necessary ISK.

Always remember, too, that winning at *EVE: The Second Genesis* follows the same principles as any other strategy card game – you need to move fast to exploit the strengths of your deck before your opponent has a chance to respond in kind. Some cards work better in combination with others; if your deck utilises such a combination, make sure you pack in four of each of the cards that you need (or as many as your collection allows).

Although it may be tempting to add in the odd extra card because you like its ability (or its picture), if it doesn't fit with what your deck is trying to do then put it to one side. 'Kitchen sink' style decks do not tend to be very good at anything in particular – certainly not the kind of thing you will want to employ in an even remotely competitive game.

RARING TO GO? DON'T BE FOILED

The rarity type of a card reflects how often you will come across it in boosters, and thus how valuable it is to you and other player collectors. The most common rarity is simply called 'common', with 'uncommon' and 'rare' cards occurring less often. To determine the rarity of a card simply check the EVE logo shown in its bottom right-hand corner:

Transparent icon = common

Dark icon with silver highlight = uncommon

Dark icon with gold highlight = rare

Foil cards = extremely rare

Due to the way the cards have been printed, the transparent icon for some commons appears as almost completely black instead of the same colour as the background of the card. Foil cards fill the rare slot of some booster packs. Foil cards are taken from a foiled sheet of cards which have an equivalent rarity to their non-foiled counterparts, and they are particularly treasured by many collectors, so can be worth a bit more to traders.



If you have access to a wide selection of cards, you will notice that, aside from the straightforward ship-building approach, there are a number of more specialised cards which lend themselves to a particular style of play. Many of these strategies are associated with a particular empire from the game's background.

VARYING YOUR STRATEGY

For example, you will see that the Caldari players have unique access to a number of cards which allow them to draw additional cards on top of the basic draw that takes place in the Draw Phase. The value of increasing and maximising the options available in your hand of cards in this way cannot be understated.

Similarly, Amarr players have access to more card-denial actions than any non-Amarr players – i.e. game effects that destroy cards, prevent cards from being played, or which return cards to their owner's hand. These cards can be used to frustrate and control an opponent so that they are unable to use their best cards against you.

Minmatar players will find that their faction

is the only one to have ships with the Kamikaze combat effect, and many of these ships are very cheap to bring into play. By taking the offensive early, and by using other unique Minmatar cards which deal additional damage or which increase ship attacks, a player can strike swiftly and effectively while their opponent is still attempting to build their strength.

In contrast, the Gallente have access to many ships that provide a variety of multiple commands, allowing them to multi-task, or to adapt to different situations. The Gallente also have access to the most mining, hauling and trading commands of any faction, which can, in turn, be used to generate very large amounts of ISK to fuel your winning strategy.

STARBASES & OUTER REGIONS

Your choice of starbase and outer regions can make a huge difference to the way your deck plays, and can often be crucial in helping you win. For example, if your market does not produce much income, an outer region can be used to provide you with a much needed Ⓢ

➡ **WINNING AT EVE FOLLOWS THE SAME PRINCIPLES AS ANY OTHER CCG. YOU NEED TO MOVE FAST TO EXPLOIT THE STRENGTHS OF YOUR OWN DECK BEFORE YOUR OPPONENT HAS A CHANCE TO RESPOND IN KIND**

➡ A GAME SUCH AS *EVE:TSG* TAKES PATIENCE AND PRACTICE. EVEN IF YOU WIN YOUR FIRST FEW GAMES, IT'S UNLIKELY YOUR DECK WILL BE EFFICIENTLY HONED AT THE OUTSET

Ⓒ ISK boost, or alternatively you can match the income-generating special abilities of Heaven, Metropolis or The Khanid Kingdom with your market's strategy to great effect.

Similarly, the upgraded versions of the starbase cards provide additional special abilities to complement your game, whether they are resource denial, enhanced damage, or alternative victory conditions. We will look at the different choices of starbase and outer region cards in more detail in future articles.

KEEP TRYING

A strategy game such as *EVE: The Second Genesis* takes patience and practice. Even if you win your first few games, it is unlikely that your deck will be efficiently honed at the outset. More often than not you will find that, after a few games, you will have a better feel for what your deck can do, and which cards need to be changed or increased in number. Different opponents will have access to different selections of cards, and over time your own

collection will change and improve as you collect and trade with your friends.

If things go wrong and you lose, try not to be too disheartened. Try to think about the choices you made during the game. Did you make any mistakes? Were you unable to draw the cards you needed? The game is not just about deck construction, but about predicting what your opponents will play, and what decisions you both make as the game plays out.

Also bear in mind that even the best players and the best decks can hit a run of bad luck. If you have a bad hand of cards then try to cycle through to better cards as quickly as you can. If you make a bad move then do not let it distract you from trying to make up for it.

Remember that in the end, no matter what happens, it's only a game, and there'll always be a next time.

Each issue we will be expanding upon deck construction and game strategies for use in the EVE CCG. ☐

DOING THE REAL MATH

There isn't really space here to go into the detail of probability theory, and besides, I'm no expert. However, a little research shows that in respect of the number of possible combinations of cards from your deck:

Total number of possible combinations = $N / [R \times (N-R)]$

Where N is the number of cards in the deck and R is the number of cards being selected. Hence, if you were to draw a hand of seven cards from a deck of 52, the total number of combinations would be:

$52 / [7 \times (52-7)] = 8.06582 \times 10^6 / 8.37356 \times 10^5 = 96,324,883,200$

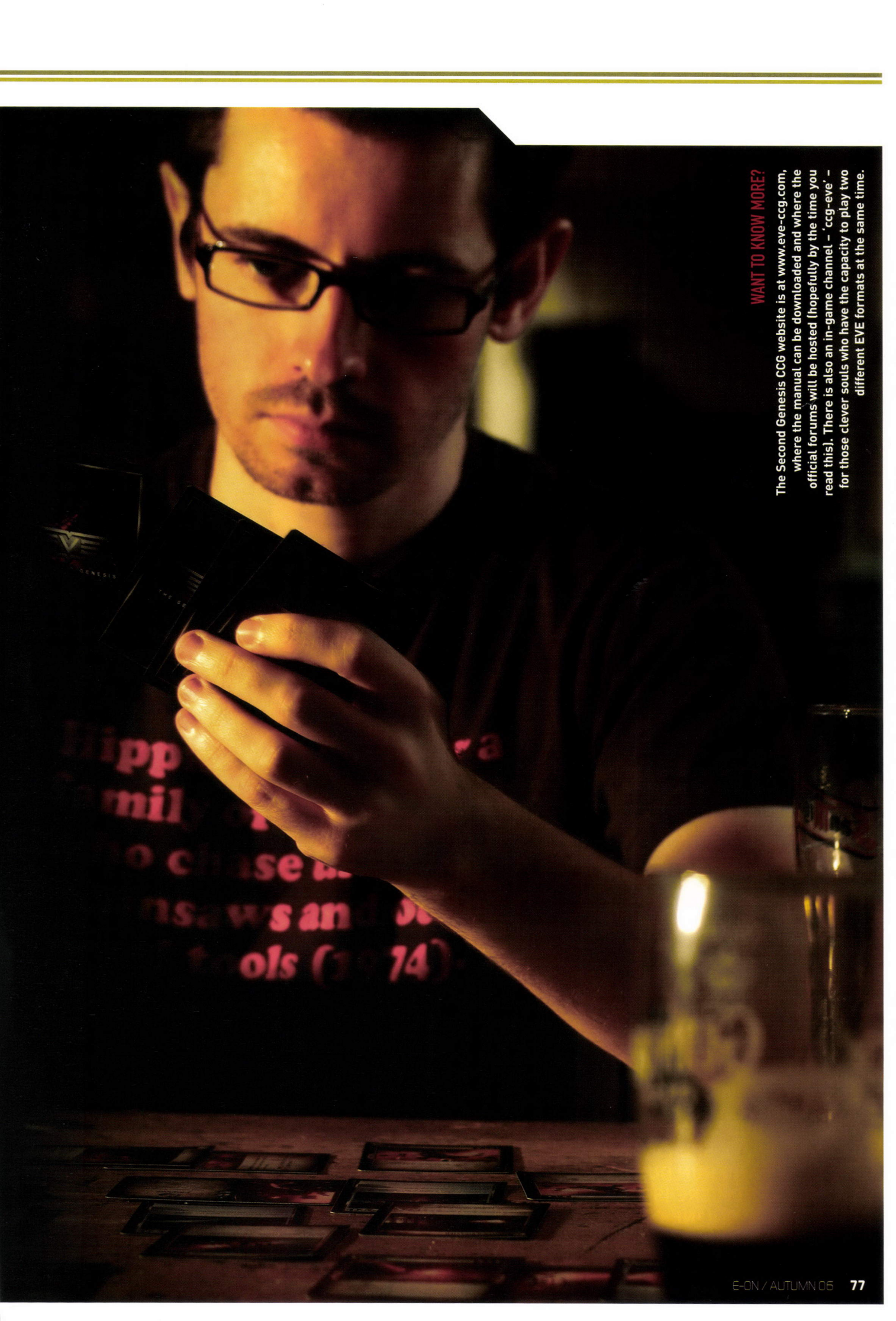
Working out whether a particular card will come up within X draws when there are Y cards in the deck is a little more tricky(!) Rather than go through the whole calculation, I've cut to the chase to provide just the results for your reference:

No. of draws	1 copies	2 copies	3 copies	4 copies	8 copies	9 copies	10 copies	11 copies	12 copies	13 copies	14 copies	15 copies
1	1.92	3.85	5.77	7.69	15.38	17.31	19.23	21.15	23.08	25.00	26.92	28.85
2	3.85	7.62	11.31	14.93	28.66	31.90	35.07	38.16	41.18	44.12	46.98	49.77
3	5.77	11.31	16.63	21.74	40.07	44.16	48.05	51.76	55.29	58.65	61.83	64.84
4	7.69	14.93	21.74	28.13	49.86	54.41	58.66	62.59	66.24	69.62	72.73	75.60
5	9.62	18.48	26.63	34.12	58.21	62.96	67.27	71.17	74.68	77.85	80.69	83.23
6	11.54	21.95	31.31	39.72	65.33	70.05	74.23	77.91	81.15	83.97	86.44	88.58
7 (starting hand)	13.46	25.34	35.79	44.96	71.36	75.91	79.83	83.20	86.06	88.50	90.57	92.30
8	15.38	28.66	40.07	49.86	76.45	80.73	84.32	87.30	89.78	91.82	93.50	94.87
9	17.31	31.90	44.16	54.41	80.73	84.67	87.88	90.48	92.57	94.24	95.57	96.62
10	19.23	35.07	48.05	58.66	84.32	87.88	90.70	92.91	94.64	95.98	97.01	97.80
11	21.15	38.16	51.76	62.59	87.30	90.48	92.91	94.77	96.17	97.23	98.01	98.58
12	23.08	41.18	55.29	66.24	89.78	92.57	94.64	96.17	97.29	98.11	98.69	99.10
13	25.00	44.12	58.65	69.62	91.82	94.24	95.98	97.23	98.11	98.72	99.15	99.44
14	26.92	46.98	61.83	72.73	93.50	95.57	97.01	98.01	98.69	99.15	99.45	99.65
15	28.85	49.77	64.84	75.60	94.87	96.62	97.80	98.58	99.10	99.44	99.65	99.79

(all values expressed as per centages)

As you can see, by including four copies of the same card in your deck of 52, your starting hand of seven cards has a nearly 45% chance of including one copy of that card. This probability increases for each additional draw made from the deck as the game progresses. Similarly, if you include ten income-generating cards in your deck your starting hand will have a nearly 80% chance of including at least one of these cards. If you instead include 12 such cards the chance is increased to more than 86%, or if you include 14 the chance is increased further to more than 90%.

If there are any budding mathematicians out there who are able to correct me or offer further illumination to this deck theory then please get in touch at the usual E-ON address!



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The Second Genesis CCG website is at www.eve-ccg.com, where the manual can be downloaded and where the official forums will be hosted (hopefully by the time you read this). There is also an in-game channel – ‘ccg-eve’ – for those clever souls who have the capacity to play two different EVE formats at the same time.

NOT-AT-ALL BIASED

STAVROS' GUIDE TO HOW GOOD IS YOUR ALLIANCE?

The EveTV star (who doesn't look at all like one of the Angry Beavers), gives us his insights on a topic that comes a close second to mining on his list of specialist EVE subjects

GOOD

1. Any self-respecting alliance worth its weight has to have an all-capitalised name. To not use the holy caps lock key in the naming of your alliance is to commit sin against the cruise control of cool, and, as such, relegates your alliance to a life of mediocrity.

2. Understand that forum warfare is 99% of EVE. Any self-respecting PvP alliance understands that actually fighting in EVE is more for show than anything else. The real battle is fought on the forums by the REAL men and women of any alliance. The forum is where men are men and the women are mostly men as well; it's where battles are won and lost without even a single shot being fired.

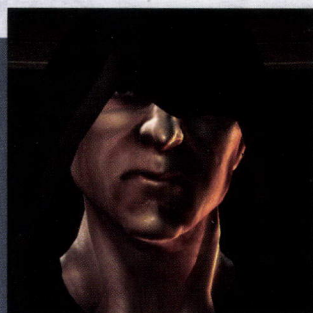
3. Talking me up on the forums. Being good at PvP requires good taste and also a sense of humour.

Anyone that posts good things about me on the forums is obviously great and, as such, must rule at PvP. Period, end of story.

4. Members must have good names. Having members of your alliance with amazing and witty names like 'DOGWITHMEAT' is a guaranteed way to turn your wimpy alliance into a fleet of pwn mobiles.

5. Interesting abbreviations such as the Coalition Of Carebear Killers (sadly, now reduced to CCK). Having funny abbreviations such as this is (used to be) well known to increase combat prowess by 134% whilst improving maturity and virility of EveTV personalities a further 208%.

6. If I, the mighty and well-informed Stavros, do not like an alliance, then it sucks. This is an undeniable, irrefutable fact and the strongest way that an alliance can fail. Because at the end of the day, I was on TV, so I'm right and if you don't like it, well you can just sit on a couch in front of 10,000 people and say different. Oh wait, you can't...



Disclaimer > The warped and incongruous beliefs of Stavros do not necessarily represent those of E-ON, CCP, MMM, the CIA, KFC or any other right-minded organisation. We just needed to make that crystal clear, OK?

BAD

1. When naming an alliance it is important to make sure that your chosen moniker does not sound like a cross between something out of [insert generic wizards and elves book here] and some children's cartoon from your misspent youth. Names like 'Holy Protectors Of The Imperial Amarrian Planets Of The Burning Moon', make you sound pretty awful, and drops the tracking on all your turrets.

2. Role-playing severely decreases your effectiveness as a gun-toting space-monkey. To role-play is to admit you suck so badly at a game that instead of being good and playing as yourself, you have to pretend to be someone (and in certain cases, something) else to hide the fact that you suck so bad.

Also, role-playing leads to LARPing which, unless the internet has lied to me, involves running around forests with latex swords, throwing ping-pong balls at each other and shouting 'pew pew'. It's a slippery slope people...

3. Saying bad things about me on the forums. This is a huge indicator that the alliance responsible is bad, really bad. Posting bad things about me on the forums or disagreeing with me (even if I'm wrong - which I never am) is a sure-fire indicator of a lack of PvP skills as well as downright idiocy.

4. Sounding like a role-playing alliance (note - not the same as #2). When naming your alliance it is important to make sure that your sobriquet does not make you sound like a role-playing alliance, or, for example (just off the top of my head here) you may be wrongly labelled as a role-playing alliance for two weeks by an evil TV show and ridiculed as such. Not that this ever actually happened, ever. Morsus Mihi, anyone?

EVE A-Z

E: EVE wouldn't be the same without it

E-ON

Pricey magazine that takes three months to produce, is immediately outdated upon publication, arrives late, crumpled and riddled with typographical errors. Yet no one can come up with a bad word to say about it. Which is nice.

Egg

Common parlance for an escape capsule, because it's shaped like a bird's ovum, is filled with synthetic albumen and makes a satisfying noise when external forces cause its innards to be exposed.

Ego

See: Istvaan Shogaatsu (aka Hellgremlin).

Elections (Gallente)

Near-mythical in-game event where players were allowed to vote for their preferred presidential candidate to head the Gallente Federation. Unfortunately, the voting booths were equipped with antiquated sub-light communication systems and results won't reach the voting centre for another 16 million years.

EVE (aka EVE-Online, E0, Space Mining Simulator v1.0...)

A massively-complicated, lag-ridden computer game for people who watch far too much *Star Trek* and who couldn't get laid if they were a female bed in a sex-starved, alpha-male bed factory where demand that year had been particularly slow. Also a brand of tampon, a Hungarian porn actress, an incidental character from *Sonic The Hedgehog*, the title of a 1979 Alan Parson's Project album and the apple-devouring woman responsible for all the evils of this world.

EVE-

A prefix for any number of websites and services that claim to service the game EVE-Online. Examples: EVE-Radio, EVE-Files, EVE-Search, EVE-Dating, EVE-Geek, EVE-TV, EVE-Please, EVE-Make, EVE-It, EVE-Stop...

Event

Pre-organised, EVE-themed gathering where groups of ugly, nerdy guys in black t-shirts converge in one location in a way reminiscent of salmon returning to their birthplace (but without the ample breeding opportunities).

Exhumers

Class of mining ship favoured by EVE players who can endure the gaming equivalent of having jalapeno peppers turned inside out and thrust into their tear ducts. Such people also harbour secret ambitions to have *Below The Asteroid* played at their wedding.

EON #001 REPRINT

IT'S BACK! DUE TO IMMENSELY POPULAR DEMAND, WE'VE SPLASHED OUT ON A NEW JAR OF INK AND RUN OUT A FRESH BATCH OF E-ON'S PREMIERE ISSUE! HEAD OVER TO WWW.EVE-ONLINE.COM/EON TO PLACE YOUR ORDER WHILE (RE)STOCKS LAST!



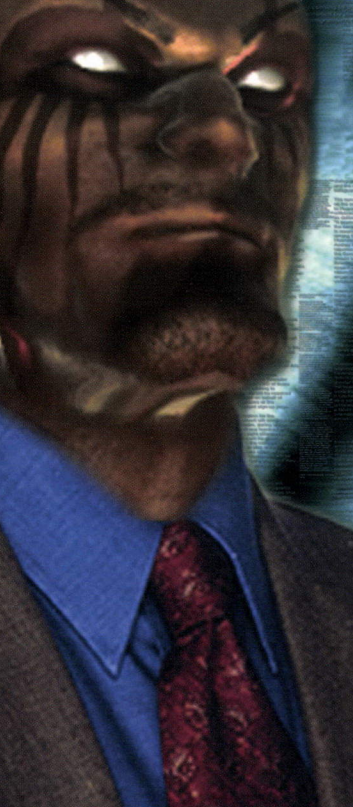
WITH YOUR HOSTS ACIX REBORN & BLACKHOLE BOB

**LISTEN LIVE EVERY
SUNDAY 1900
EVE GAME TIME
FOR YOUR FILL OF
THE NEWS AND
INTERVIEWS FOR &
ABOUT THE PLAYERS
OF EVE-ONLINE**

Professor Kiyudas Tsalmaki,
Lecturer in Emergent
Warfare Analysis at the
State War Academy, has
remarked that given the
prizes of the first

A close-up, high-contrast image of a character's face, likely from the Star Trek: Voyager series. The character has dark skin and is looking directly at the viewer with intense, glowing yellow eyes. The lighting is dramatic, with deep shadows and bright highlights on the face.

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